

5

9 3 2 1 5



The Brahma Samaj.

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S ESSAYS : THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL.

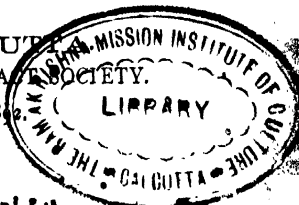
Part II.

[SECOND EDITION.]

K. C. Sen

CALCUTTA
BRAHMO TRADING SOCIETY.

1892.



Rights Reserved.

National Library, Calcutta
Gift & Exchange Division



PRINTED BY R. S. BHATTACHARJI,
AT THE BIDHAN PRESS.
78, UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD.

✓	Acc. No.	93215
	Class No.	254.56
	Date	15.5.76
	Vol.	5
	Part	Ch
	✓	✓
	Ex. Card	L.N.
	Checked	

Contents.

	Page.
An Appeal to Young India ...	1
Young Bengal. This is for you ...	18
Be Prayerful ...	27
Religion of Love ...	42
Basis of Brahmoism ...	53
Brethren, Love your Father ...	69
Signs of the Times ...	79
An Exhortation ...	95
Testimonies to the Validity of Intuitions. Part I	102
" " " " Part II	113
The Revd. S. Dyson's Questions on Brahmoism	
Answered ...	124
Questions and Answers ...	135
Revelation ...	141
Atonement and Salvation ...	153

Presented by National
Library

AN APPEAL TO YOUNG INDIA.

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,

I purpose to communicate to you a few thoughts and suggestions on your duties in the present critical period of the social history of India. I do not pretend to edify you. Mine is an humbler mission. I approach you as your servant—as one who would humbly serve his country and countrymen. Earnestly do I pray and trust you will accept my services,—and may Providence graciously vouchsafe to bless them to the good of my country!

India, our father-land, is a great country, and is destined to occupy a very high place in the scale of nations. The age in which we live is also peculiarly important as marking the transition-state of native society. Both these considerations are stirring and cannot fail to rouse our thoughts and energies. Born in India, natives of the soil, and living in the present age we cannot but look with peculiar interest upon the scenes and events around us. Mighty revolutions are taking place on all sides. Every department of native society is undergoing change, radical and organic change. Ideas and tastes are changing, customs and manners are changing, old institutions are giving place to new ones, as-

pirations and energies are turning into new channels ; there are changes even in our mode of living. The spirit of Western enlightenment and civilization is at work in the core of Hindu society, and is, somewhere perceptibly, somewhere secretly, transforming, remodelling, and revolutionising its entire organism. Its powerful influence has shaken the enormous fabric of Hinduism to its very foundations, and convulsed the very heart of the nation ; and every sphere of native thought and occupation, intellectual, social, political, commercial and religious is in a state of violent fermentation. Can you stand as unconcerned spectators of this mighty revolutionary movement ? Do not your hearts throb with anxiety as you ponder on it and think of the future of your great country ? Are not your best interests involved in the struggle going on around you between the old and new, the native and foreign, between established usages and the advancing tide of civilization ? Who can sleep peacefully amid the din and clatter and wild excitement of the battle-field ? When all India from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin seems to be one scene of revolutionary strife—of bristling bayonets and roaring artillery, of continued bombarding and cannonading on the old forts of Hinduism, shall we sleep on the couch of imagined security ? In the midst of such a scene surely we ought to be awake to our real situation and conduct ourselves with a full sense of our responsibilities. For what will come out of the

formidable crisis which has overtaken us. it is difficult to divine. Dire disasters are impending, awful contingencies are hovering about us, and unless we seasonably provide against them great shall be the ruin. The whole scene is stirring, and imperatively calls upon us all to meet the crisis full in the face and do our duty manfully. And surely those who, through selfish indolence, apathy or fear, would neglect to do their duty will expose themselves and posterity to misery. Those who intend to float securely in their old bark on the unruffled sea of established errors and superstition will be undeceived when the dashing surges of progress will wreck and shatter to pieces their frail bark. Those who fancy they are safe in the impregnable citadel of orthodoxy and count with certainty upon surviving all attacks, will find, when too late, that the champions of truth have effected a breach, marched in and forced their surrender at their immense cost. Those who, though enlightened, are, yet, afraid to encounter social persecution, and therefore put on the cloak of hypocrisy and seek comfort in compromise, will not only bring upon themselves misery and reproach but will bequeath an accursed legacy of sin and suffering to their descendants. Those again on the other hand who regardless of reformation would take advantage of the present unsettled state of things to introduce foreign fashions for mere pleasure's sake, will find themselves and followers in a sea of dissipation and reckless voluptuousness. Those who

without deliberation or foresight would venture upon innovations for innovations' sake, or embark upon half measures to remedy only partial evils, will throw away both good and evil in one indiscriminate sweep or introduce worse evils than those already existing. While on the contrary, those who armed with conscience and courage will manfully combat prejudices and obnoxious institutions, freely embrace what is good and as freely shun what is evil, and consistently labour to reform themselves, their families and their country, will pass unscathed through the ordeal, themselves blessed with the laurels of glory and blessing their country with truth, freedom and happiness. In fact nothing but fearless and disinterested patriotism, regulated and sustained by keen sense of duty, will save native society from the evils under which it is groaning, or guard it against new evils; nothing but this will enable India to pass safely through the present crisis and rise from its trials reformed and regenerated.

During this period of transition it is, therefore, evidently the duty of all who are interested in India's welfare to labour conscientiously to remove her wants, alleviate her sufferings, guard her against imminent perils and place her in the way of social, moral and religious advancement. Such an arduous and important task belongs especially to Young India—to the enlightened representatives of the rising generation. To you your country looks up for protection and prosperity. Her future greatly depends upon

you, and from you she expects at least the foundation of her future progress and well-being. You hold in your hands the key of her destiny, and before the tribunal of God and man you stand accountable for the solemn trust. If you discharge your duties well and conscientiously her regeneration will fairly commence. Do not then neglect her claims upon your sympathy. Let patriotism warm your hearts and quicken your energies, as education, I hope, has expanded your understanding and enlarged your views. If your eyes have been opened to the actual condition of your mother country, and to the great duties you owe her, then flinging away selfish apathy and indifference apply yourselves with adequate vigor to her amelioration. All that I may say will fail to make you realize her lamentable position. Behold with your own eyes the extent of her destitution, physical, moral and social ; if you have hearts to feel you must offer prompt and compassionate reponse to her loud cries for succour, and if you have energies you must forthwith run to her rescue. In order that you may act well, you should feel strongly ; to feel strongly you have but to study your own experiences. Argumentative appeals and glowing descriptions will conjure up but a sorry picture in comparison with what your own observations and experiences tell of the depth of India's degradation. Would you realize it ? Look at yourselves, enchained to customs, deprived of freedom, lorded over by, an ignorant

and crafty priesthood, your better sense and better feelings all smothered under the crushing weight of custom ; look at your homes, scenes of indescribable misery, your wives and sisters, your mothers and daughters immured within the dungeon of the zenana, ignorant of the outside world, little better than slaves whose charter of liberty of thought and action has been ignored : look at your social constitution and customs, the mass of enervating, demoralizing and degrading causes there working. Watch your daily life, how almost at every turn you meet with some demand for the sacrifice of your conscience, some temptation to hypocrisy, some obstacles to your improvement and true happiness. Say from your own experience, whether you are not hemmed in on all sides by a system of things which you cannot but hate and abhor, denounce, and curse ; whether the spiritual government under which you live is not despotism of the most galling and revolting type, oppressive to the body, injurious to the mind and deadly to the soul ? Are you not yoked to some horrid customs of which you feel ashamed, and which to say the least are a scandal to reason, and have you not often sighed and panted for immediate deliverance ? Are you not required to pass through a daily routine of social and domestic concerns against which your educated ideas and cultivated tastes perpetually protest ? And considering the sum total of mischief and misery caused by Hinduism to its followers,

religiously, socially and physically, have you not often wept bitterly in solitude, for your hard lot and that of your countrymen? Surely you do not require the aid of imagination to paint in gloomy colors the deplorable state of native society in order to rouse your sympathy, excite your commiseration and stimulate your energies, when it is before you and encompasses you in all its awful reality. Surely you do not stand in need of any cogent arguments from others to convince you of what your own senses so painfully teach you and which your personal experiences confirm with irrefragable authority. Spare me then, fellow-countrymen, the task of arguing a matter which is so entirely supported by the testimonies of your own feelings and observations. You must admit, for you yourselves have felt, the necessity of a thorough reformation of Hindu society; I have shown its urgency in the present age of transition.

How this great and urgent work may be successfully achieved, and what are the special duties of Young India in connection with it,—these are the two practical questions which it is necessary to solve, that those who are in earnest may ascertain their precise line of action and qualify themselves for it so as to insure success.

A firm sense of duty ought to be the basis of all reform movements. It is dangerous to undertake them from any other motive. If in endeavouring to reform your country your object be merely to imitate foreign nations, or introduce

more fashionable luxuries of civilization, or if you seek to abolish only some of the superficial evils of society and leave the more important ones intact with a view to avoid persecution ; if you gauge your work by the standard of your own convenience, or measure your movements according to the arithmetic of the utilitarian principle of happiness, you will either miss your primary object wholly, or in rescuing society from one species of evil open the floodgates of new and perhaps greater evils. Or if a mere desire of innovation be the moving impulse, however vigorous and apparently successful your movement may be at first, it will drop so soon as the gloss of novelty wears away and probably after a few rash and indiscreet experiments. Well-directed and sustained reforms are possible only under a strong sense of duty. Let none embark on the enterprize of Indian reformation but those who feel morally impelled to engage in it as a sacred and bounden duty. Right motives will, in the long run, insure sound and successful reforms, and act as a safeguard against partial, fashionable and dangerous innovations. The moral sense will also induce earnestness without which success is hardly possible. It will arm the reformer with undaunted courage, firm resolution and uncompromising integrity of character, and will thereby prepare him for open and fearless combat with evil. Fully conscious of his accountability to God for his stewardship, he will neither shirk his duty, nor sacrifice truth for

the sake of pleasing man. He will take a decided stand against evil of every kind, and successfully level the artillery of his mighty energies and moral heroism against its hitherto impregnable strongholds. Those, therefore, who desire to fight the battle of reform must be first of all suitably armed and equipped with a strong and abiding sense of duty.

Secondly, those who desire to reform their country must first reform themselves. Good examples are always powerful engines of conversion, while the fervid eloquence of hypocritical teaching obstructs instead of advancing the cause of truth. Let us be sincere and honest, let us show in our actual lives the truths we cherish in our hearts, without reserve or scruple, before we expect others to follow us. Let us show sufficient respect for ourselves ere we expect others to have respect for us. We should also remember that a nation is but the totality of individuals and that without the reformation of individuals there can be no national reformation. It has, however, become too much the fashion with our pseudo reformers to forget the individual in the nation, to confine themselves to preaching and theorizing, leaving action to every body else. But if every one thus walks out of himself to preach reform to others, who is to take care of self? If every one be determined not to act till others have made the road smooth for him, who is to begin? It is a fatal mistake to suppose that mere exhortations will exalt or regener-

ate India. Such a work belongs peculiarly to consistent, sincere and intrepid reformers who can say to others—Do as we do. It is infinitely better that we should have a handful of such reformers than that there should be about us a numerous host of blustering preachers who would preach truth to all but themselves. Those who aspire to the exalted office of true reformers must make their professions and practices agree, so that they may influence others by their living examples. Let them live down error instead of merely attempting to cry it down.

Lastly, the paths of reformation are thorny, and therefore they who tread these paths must be prepared for the thorns: there is no royal road to reformation. In India reforms cannot but be peculiarly trying. To overturn the despotism of a mighty hierarchy firmly established for centuries in the heart of the nation, to abolish customs and institutions assimilated to the very blood of our social organism, to break asunder the ties of caste which bind together our domestic and social system—these are works of tremendous difficulty and must be achieved at great cost, and in the face of fierce opposition. Our reformers must be prepared for the worst. Hardships they must endure, persecution they must encounter, and there will be many a struggle and sacrifice and suffering before they succeed in their cause. In the initiative stage of reformation those who occupy the front ranks must fully bear the brunt of opposition, and

Let the desperate onset of newly awakened antagonism with fortitude and valor, that their followers may in future enjoy the fruits of their labours. They must sacrifice selfish considerations for their country, and the opinion of the world, for the approbation of conscience,—and at any cost, even with the price of their blood must they purchase truth for themselves and for their dear country.

These, I believe, are the three essential requisites of sound and successful reformation, the necessary qualifications of our reformers. Possessed of these they will acquit themselves honorably in the fulfilment of their mission, and with the power of truth they will bear down all opposition, triumph over their adversaries and lead their country into the path of regeneration. Let us now consider the chief evils in Hindu society against which they should direct their special exertions with a view to lay the foundation of a thorough social and moral reformation.

There can be no doubt that the root of all the evils which afflict Hindoo society, that which constitutes the chief cause of its degradation is Idolatry. Idolatry is the curse of Hindustan, the deadly canker that has eaten into the vitals of native society. It would be an insult to your superior education to say that you have faith in idolatry, that you still cherish in your hearts reverence for the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, or that you believe in the thousand and one absurdities of your ancestral

creed. But however repugnant to your understanding and repulsive to your good sense the idolatry of your forefathers may be, there is not a thorough appreciation of its deadly character on moral grounds. It will not do to retain in the mind a speculative and passive disbelief in its dogmas, you must practically break with it as a dangerous sin and an abomination : you must give it up altogether, as an unclean thing. You must discountenance it, discourage it, oppose it and hunt it out of your country. For the sake of your souls and for the sake of the souls of the millions of your countrymen, come away from hateful idolatry, and acknowledge the one supreme and true God, our Maker, Preserver and Moral Governor, not in belief only but in the every-day concerns and avocations of your life. By offering such uncompromising allegiance to Him and dedicating yourselves wholly to His service you will rescue your own consciences from corruption and sin, and your country from superstition, priestcraft, absurd rites, injurious practices and horrid customs and usages. By declaring a vigorous crusade against Hinduism you will lay the axe at the root of the tree of corruption.

Next to idolatry and vitally connected with its huge system is Caste. You should deal with it as manfully and unsparingly as with idolatry. That Hindu castism is a frightful social scourge no one can deny. It has completely and hopelessly wrecked social unity, harmony, and happi-

ness, and for centuries it has opposed all social progress. But few seem to think that it is not so much as a social but as a religious institution that it has become the great scourge it really is. As a system of absurd social distinctions it is certainly pernicious. But when we view it on moral grounds it appears as a scandal to conscience, and an insult to humanity, and all our moral ideas and sentiments rise to execrate it, and to demand its immediate extermination. Caste is the bulwark of Hindu idolatry and the safeguard of Brahminical priesthood. It is an audacious and sacrilegious violation of God's law of human brotherhood. It makes civil distinctions inviolable divine institutions, and in the name of the Holy God sows perpetual discord and enmity among His children! It exalts one section of the people above the rest, gives the former, under the seal of divine sanction, the monopoly of education, religion and all the advantages of social pre-eminence, and vests them with the arbitrary authority of exercising a tyrannical sway over unfortunate and helpless millions of human souls trampling them under their feet and holding them in a state of miserable servitude. It sets up the Brahminical order as the very vice-gerents of the Deity and stamps the mass of the population as a degraded and unclean race, unworthy of manhood and unfit for heaven. Who can tolerate this woful despotism, this system of abhorrent slavery, this robbery of divine authority? Fellow-countrymen, if you

abjure idolatry and rally under the heavenly standard of the true God, you must establish and organize a new brotherhood on the basis of enlightened thoughts and sentiments : in this reformed alliance you must discard and discountenance all caste distinctions, that truth may be freely embraced by all, Brahmin and Sudra alike, and both by virtue of birthright may secure access to the blessings of spiritual freedom, progress and happiness, without let or hindrance. Abandon idolatry and seek the worship of the true God ; kill the monster caste and form a rational and religious brotherhood of all your reformed countrymen.

Thirdly, our Marriage Customs involve evils of great magnitude which urgently call for reform. They are not only repugnant to morality and reason, but constitute one of the powerful causes of the physical degeneracy of our nation. Horrid Polygamy leads this mighty train of evils. Supported by Kulinism it gives certain persons privilege to marry several scores of wives and to make holy matrimony a dishonorable traffic for money's sake ; it joins in wedlock a man eighty years old with a girl hardly nine ; it forces many of the fair sex to perpetual celibacy or to virtual widowhood, and tempts many to a life of infamy, rendering the hymeneal altar a curse instead of a blessing. Premature marriages are not less mischievous. Experience has shown how they sap the foundation of the nation's health, and interfere with the nobler

purposes of conjugal union. The forcible prohibition of the re-marriage of widows is simply an act of atrocious inhumanity, which is the more painful on account of the excruciating tortures and penances which Hindoo widows are religiously forced to undergo under the penalty of the forfeiture of heaven. Not to speak of conscience, the very feelings of the native ought to stand up to protest against this cruel custom. The countless restrictions which control marriage union and confine it not only within the membership of the same caste, but even within its minute and contracted divisions and subdivisions, not only tend to keep up the system of caste, which is itself a great evil, but prevent the growth of the nation. They ought to be gradually set aside, and the fullest scope should be given to the important alliances upon which domestic happiness rests, by promoting inter-marriages between members of different castes, and the different races of India.

Fourthly, the Zenana requires thorough reform. On this point it is unnecessary to dilate, as you daily witness the miserable condition of your wives and sisters, your mothers and daughters; you daily feel the wretchedness of your homes. And certainly nothing can be clearer to you than this, that so long as our females continue in their present degraded state, menials of the household, slaves of ignorance and superstition, and withal cyphers in society, the reformation of our country will be partial and superficial. Women's minds

are powerful, powerful for propagating good as well as evil. Do what you will to promote reformation, so long as errors and prejudices lodge in their minds they shall be perpetuated from generation to generation. While blessed with knowledge and refinement our females will establish and extend the kingdom of truth with more than missionary zeal; and educated and dutiful mothers will achieve greater success in civilizing the country than all its schools and colleges. But apart from considerations of expediency, charity and justice imperatively demand that you should share with your wives and sisters the blessings of education. Remember that you have no right to treat them as outcasts of society, and deny them the precious advantages which you enjoy, and to which as God's children and possessed of immortal and responsible souls they too are fully entitled. Do full justice to their souls and rescue them from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition and their attendant evils. Illumine their minds with the light of sound and liberal education, admit them into rational intercourse with enlightened and virtuous companions; above all let them join you in your daily worship of the True God. Thus our countrymen and women will walk hand in hand in the path of intellectual and moral advancement, and thus as our social customs improve, enlightened and happy homes will be established as the sure basis of national prosperity and greatness.

Educated countrymen, here is a rough outline of your principal duties in connection with the reformation of your country. I know you will say it is an old stereotyped reform scheme. It is not intended, brethren, that you will grow wiser from its perusal. I appeal to the conscience, not to the intellect of Young India: I offer no new theme for discussion or criticism, but a few simple and well-known truths for action. I beseech you to accept my appeal in this light and give it a practical response. Do not put it away from the individual and view it as entirely a thing of joint concern to be undertaken by an organised co-operative body. I appeal to you as individuals, not as a community; I invite you individually to do your respective duties, in your respective spheres of life, and according to your means and opportunities, reforming yourselves, your families and those under your influence: and you may rest assured co-operation will necessarily follow. If a few earnest souls at least be ready to do their duty fearlessly and conscientiously, they will naturally co-operate with each other with cordial brotherly love, and may thus form eventually a powerful national reform alliance. Thus as individuals unite, may families co-work, may communities be formed, may cities and villages join together: may Young Bengal and Young Bombay, Young Madras and Young Punjab combine; and may the circle gradually widen itself till it brings the whole nation within its embrace! Then

truth shall shine throughout the length and breadth of India and harmony reign among its vast population !

YOUNG BENGAL,

THIS IS FOR YOU.

No 1.]

[June, 1860

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am extremely happy to learn that you have recently abandoned those sceptical notions which you hitherto so obstinately cherished, and which rendered you an object of pity to many of your friends. Allow me to congratulate you, with all my heart, on this important and blessed change in your mind. Oh ! how shocking, cheerless, and pitiable, my friend, was your former life ! Intoxicated with your high intellectual attainments you used to speak scoffingly of morality, religion and God, and conduct yourself with an amount of atheistic pride and recklessness awful to conceive. Morality you laughed at as nothing more than self-interest ; religion you regarded as a phantom conjured up by crafty priests to terrify and gull people in order to satisfy their own lust of lucre ; and the doctrine of a future state you disposed of as a fine fancy—an idiot's dream ; and even the Holy God you tried to depose from His supremacy, and

defile His name with unholy and abominable sarcasms. The liberal education you received, instead of ennobling and exalting your mind, degraded and brutalized it. True, it led you to forsake idolatry—the worship of stocks and stones : true, it delivered you from the galling yoke of Brahminical priesthood, and the thousand and one injurious institutions which have, for centuries, smothered and paralyzed all the nobler sentiments and energies of the people, and clogged their progress. But alas ! what did it give you instead of them ! A spurious liberalism, mischievous and hateful in the extreme. You started from disbelief in idolatry and superstition ; but you landed in unbelief and scepticism. You doubted Hindooism ; but you brought yourself to doubt religion altogether. In flinging away the shackles of corrupt doctrines and institutions, you scattered to the winds the holy bonds of morality. Often were you heard to say :—“ Let the illiterate and credulous deal with religion and immortality, prayer and atonement, faith and salvation ; let them devote their minds to such visionary pursuits—I feel it degrading to my high scholarship and liberal views to countenance them. Was it to befool myself with the fantastic fancies of theologians that I so long applied my untiring energies to intellectual pursuits ? Was it for this that I consumed the midnight oil, and incessantly pored over the deep problems of science and arts ? Better far that I should, as a rational being, cultivate my

Intellect, and with head and heart, promote my worldly interests, than in the pursuit of airy nothing waste my energies in vain, and in feeding the humours of capricious priests and preachers sacrifice some of my dearest enjoyments, some of my brightest prospects! Oh for the day when men will think and feel better, and be convinced of the hollowness of religion and morality!" Dear brother, whenever I used to reflect on this your former condition, my heart was weighed down with sorrow, and said, man! son of God! canst thou degrade thyself so far, and feel so unworthily? Oh! shameful effects of education! Is this the destiny of education,—to foster scepticism and theism, and instead of harmoniously developing all the powers and sentiments of the soul, and leading them to God, destroy the best and noblest of them, and teach man to wield the weapons of revolt against the All-Holy, his Father and Master? If so, then perish such education from the face of the earth, and let simple untutored man enjoy bliss supreme in the company of his Father

But—blessed be God—your heart has undergone a change for the better. You have left the gloomy and frightful den of ungodliness and scepticism—which was detrimental to your best interests and derogatory to your honor; you have begun to seek a better and worthier region, where, if you perseveringly advance, you will be led through increasing bliss, unto unfading glory and blessedness everlasting. Oh! my brother,

my heart is filled with raptures unspeakable for this happy transition in your mind—this glorious dawning of religion in your soul. May the thousands of our intelligent countrymen who, vitiated by a false enlightenment, are suffering from the deadly evils of scepticism be, like yourself, ere long delivered from them !

It is impossible, my friend, to calculate the amount of mischief which has been wrought in our country by godless education. Not only has it shed its baneful influence upon the individual, but it has proved an effective engine in counteracting, to no small extent, the social advancement of the people, and in rendering more frightful the intellectual, domestic, and moral institution of the millions of our countrymen. Let any one closely watch the proceedings of the youthful and intelligent community of our country, and he will say—Verily to this source, to the influences of ungodly education, is to be attributed the want of due progress in the social condition of the country. Witness the numerous Improvement Societies, Friendly Meetings, Debating Clubs, Literary Associations &c., whose number is hourly increasing. These are composed of young and intelligent men, or “Young Bengal,” as they are generally styled, who apply themselves to the discussion of important questions of social interest, with all youthful ardour and vehemence, and in the course of discussion display remarkable erudition and learning. Somewhere you see a batch of edu-

93215.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
LIBRARY

cated young men, full of spirit and earnestness, concocting schemes how Female Education may be carried on, how the abominable system of Caste may be abolished, how the rays of knowledge may be made to penetrate the veil of ignorance which shrouds the millions of the masses. Somewhere you hear two or three who generally pass for "the flower of Bengal" making eloquent speeches on "What Bengal ought to be," and bestirring a whole audience to marvellous excitement. Somewhere you witness whole bodies of young men unanimously pledging themselves with all solemnity to momentous resolutions like these:—we shall enlighten the masses—elevate the condition of the females—encourage brotherly feeling. Such are the great topics which our young and intelligent countrymen are ever and anon discussing with all enthusiasm and fervor, and preaching with missionary zeal. But what is the upshot of all this? "Mere prattle without practice." An elaborate essay, an eloquent speech, a warm discussion is all in all. Many and varied indeed are the schemes proposed for the country's good; but hardly do they pass beyond the pales of theory. Social reforms are speculated upon, but not practically undertaken. Already the conviction has taken a firm root in many minds, that the Bengalees are more talkers than doers. Already those whom the experience of thirty years has taught any lesson have begun to lose all confidence in our high sounding exhortations,

burning speeches, and declamatory tracts and pamphlets, and have learnt to draw a clear line of demarcation between lip-patriotism and the country's actual good. Already some have begun to enquire why do our intelligent and promising youths keep themselves away from practical undertakings—why are they more talkers than doers. This is no knotty problem—no inexplicable anomaly. What, if there is a splendid array of bright intellects? What, if there are so many societies and clubs of intelligent men, assiduously engaged in the discussion of important questions of social reforms? True, there are acute understandings and powerful intellects; true, there are high flights of imagination, and brilliant rhetorical attainments; true, there are minds stored with science and arts:—but where is the heart to work? He who yesterday protested publicly, with all might, against the bestiality of drunkenness, and exposed its brutalizing effects, is seen to-day lying in supine prostration at the feet of Bacchus—a pale emaciated slave of intemperance. He who eloquently advocates the cause of female education, and ever and anon exhorts the public to emancipate the native females, does not himself make any attempt to educate and emancipate his own wife and sisters and daughters. He who writes argumentatively and floridly on the vast importance and benefits of travel, would studiously avoid all attempts to “cross the Scinde”—nay, would wrathfully thunder forth rebukes

and scoldings, and inflict severe penalties, if possible, on any of his friends or relations who would venture to go to a foreign country, and thus carry out practically a work whose paramount importance he himself admits. He who protests violently against the system of caste, and exhorts his countrymen to abolish it forthwith, prudentially guards himself, that he may not, in any practical concern, break through its sacred bonds.

Evidently, my friend, there is not the heart to work. Alas! the moral nature is asleep: the sense of duty is dead. There is lack of moral courage—want of an active religious principle in our pseudo-patriots. Else why is it that while there is, on the one hand, so much of intelligence and intellectual progress, there is, on the other, so little of practical work for the social advancement of the country? Verily, there is a line of demarcation between a mind trained to knowledge and a heart trained to faith, piety, and moral courage. Rest assured, my friend, that if in our country intellectual progress went hand in hand with religious development, if our educated countrymen had initiated themselves in the living truths of religion patriotism would not have been a mere matter of oration and essay, but a reality in practice; and native society would have grown in health and prosperity. Drunkenness and all other fashionable vices would have been effectually extirpated from this land. Mutual

jealousies and enmity, so fearfully prevalent here, would have gradually faded away. That unity and nationality which is considered a great desideratum would have been established ; and our countrymen, consolidated by religious love, would have realized all the benefits of united exertions and mutual sympathies, and effectually surmounted many of those difficulties in the way of social reforms which are now considered insuperable. Stimulated by faith, Young Bengal would have exchanged the easy luxurious bed of speculation for the arena of arduous action, and the visionary schemes of alnascharism for actual enterprizes. Inspired with unconquerable enthusiasm by the Almighty, they would have, with mind and soul, intellect as well as will, manfully endeavoured to promote their own best interests and those of their country.

May that day draw near, my brother, when your goodly example will be followed by others of our educated countrymen ; when repenting for their sceptical recklessness, and prayerfully resigning themselves to the guidance of the Holy God they shall be regenerated in faith ; when, instead of making knowledge an accursed guide to the regions of killing scepticism and worldliness, they shall use it as the bright pole-star in the sea of life, and steer the vessel of their soul unto godliness. May wisdom and faith reign in this country in blessed union !

Go on, my dear brother, go, on in the hallowed course which you have begun. Muster up

your solemn resolves, and advance steadily, turning neither to the right nor to the left. Difficulties will meet you in the way, temptations will entice you ; but be not alarmed by the one, nor captivated by the other. Oftentimes the corrupt propensities of the mind will perchance rebel against the dictates of conscience, and threaten to arrest the growth of your soul. Oftentimes the frowns of your guardians, the derision and railleries of your neighbours, or the blandishments of your gay associates may slacken the fervour of your devotedness to God. Now and then those awful sceptical prejudices which you have destroyed may haunt you, and attempt to revive your former attachment to them. The black clouds of doubt may darken the glorious morning of your religious life. In short, various circumstances may beset you, and seek to threaten or tempt you back into your by-gone life of scepticism and worldliness. Beware, therefore, my dear brother, beware. Conduct yourself with wariness and constancy, strength and enthusiasm, but above all with thorough resignation to the Divine will. Steadily and prayerfully look up to Him—our Light and our Strength, our Father, our Friend. He will fill your mind with saving knowledge, your heart with the sweets of love, your soul with purity and your hands with strength and courage. Retain Him, my brother, in the depths of your heart, and affectionately cling to Him all the days you live. He will make you “ a defenced city, a column of

steel, and walls of brass." May the incipient glimmerings of faith in your soul gradually become brighter and brighter, and may the God of Love lead you into the everlasting and blessed mansions of purity and bliss!

Believe me

Your Sincere and Affectionate Friend in Faith,

* * * *

BE PRAYERFUL.

PRAYER; ITS SPONTANEITY, NECESSITY AND UTILITY. •

No. 2.]

[July, 1860.

I.—I have read, with great pleasure, your truly affectionate letter, and am heartily grateful to you for the wholesome advices and kind encouragements you have given me therein. I regret, however, that I do not wholly deserve the commendation which your friendly feelings have naturally led you to bestow upon me, for though I have alienated my mind from scepticism, and am convinced of the necessity and importance of religion, I have not as yet been able to establish my soul firmly on the rock of faith. There are many things I have yet to learn, many doubts yet to dispel, ere I can fully entitle myself to be called religious. However, there is one point in

the sequel of your letter, which seems to rest on a grave error, and which has led me to call on you personally that I may have it properly discussed,—I mean your advice to me to become prayerful. To speak plainly, I look upon prayer as an unwarrantable extreme of dogmatic theology. I count it one of those bold flights of religion in which it surmounts the limits of reason, and soars into the regions of transcendental mysticism—of baseless reveries and extravagant fancies. I have often thought about it, but have found nothing to shake my firm belief that it is thoroughly contradictory to logic, and irreconcilable with philosophy. Don't think, however, that I mean to depreciate the importance of religion.

B.—You are welcome, my friend, most cordially welcome. I shall, with the utmost pleasure, do all that lies in my power to help you in your religious endeavours and aspirations. Nothing affords me, my dear friend, so much joy as to aid those who sincerely and humbly seek God,—and I would give worlds for such a blessed work. I am happy, that you have, at the very outset, hit upon this pre-eminently important subject, for prayer forms the very gateway of faith. Now, tell me distinctly, what is it that troubles you on this subject.

I.—Why, the very reasonableness of prayer I dispute. My impression is, that it is altogether untenable on philosophical grounds, and, besides, not at all necessary, for certainly, a man may be

religious and yet not prayerful. I have made it a point to remain aloof from prayer till I am logically convinced of its propriety.

B.—Logically convinced of its propriety! What curious notion of prayer! Yet no wonder that you should entertain it, for agreeably to your habits of thinking you must needs pass every subject through the ordeal of demonstration. There are those who would apply geometric principles to every subject they come in contact with, and would handle every ethical and theological question as a *Q. E. D.* What fatal errors do they eventually land in!—

I.—Do you mean to say, one should scatter all his philosophy and logic to the winds, and run headlong into devotions and prayers? Really such remarks would serve to deter me from my religious pursuits, for how can I reasonably advance in religious inquiries, if I am called upon to lay down my understanding altogether, and believe whimsical doctrines which cannot bear the test of argumentation?

B.—You ought to argue, discuss, and, if possible, demonstrate. These processes I do not disparage, I do not condemn. Understanding and judgment, those valuable gifts of Providence, should not surely be suffered to 'rust in us unused.' Man ought to philosophise; it is his honor to do so. But reasoning should confine itself within its legitimate boundaries; it should not make encroachments upon regions not its own.

I.—This sort of argument by which you in-

geniously seek to exclude prayer from the province of reasoning is wholly exceptionable. It shows you are avoiding the real difficulty.

B.—Is prayer a fact of our reflective consciousness? Do you think that men are led into it by arguments and reasonings, that it is the result of logical processes?

I.—It ought to be so. Whatsoever a reasonable man does, should be the issue of deliberate thought and valid reasonings. I don't care if the illiterate and credulous pray without reasoning. 93215

B.—Well, tell me however, what prayer is.

I.—It is merely a petition for the removal of a want. In its theological acceptance, it means, I think, a petition to God for the removal of spiritual wants.

B.—Precisely so. Now closely reflect on this definition, and say—does a man pray because he has convinced himself by elaborate syllogistic arguments of the philosophical propriety of doing so? What an unnatural process!

I.—Why unnatural? You seem to have made it a point to decry reasoning altogether.

B.—Patiently consider what I say. The tender innocent child lifts its tearful eyes towards its mother, and in semi-articulate language cries—“Mamma! milk.” The benighted beggar writhing grievously under the inclemencies of the weather knocks at the door of the first house he meets, and ardently exclaims—“Generous and noble soul, have mercy on me; help me, O help

me." The patient suffering from the torments of some acute disease looks up to the doctor, and earnestly prays—"Doctor, save me—save me doctor—I can bear no longer." Now tell me what is it that leads to prayer in such cases? Does logic impel the child, the beggar, and the patient to ask for relief? Is it the conclusions of reasoning that dictate them to do so? Far from it. Common sense assures us, it is the violent feeling of want that drives them to pray. Who doubts that when the hungry and the thirsty lustily cry for food and drink, it is not a Whately, a Mill, or a Hamilton, but nature, that prompts them to do so? Man feels a want, and naturally prays for its removal. Evidently, prayer in all such cases is but the spontaneous outpouring of the mind, and is not a reflective process. Are you not aware of the wide distinction which lies between these two processes of the mind—the one, in which it resorts to the formal processes of reasoning and inference,—the other, in which it acts instinctively and spontaneously, actuated by certain deep natural impulses thoroughly independent of reflection?

I.—Certainly it is absurd to say, that when we pray for any physical necessities, we ply the canons of logic. We want to eat, because we are hungry; we want to drink, because we are thirsty. There is not the least shadow of ratiocination, of inference from premises, of *Because* and *Therefore* in such cases. Prayer springs outright from the sense of want.

B.—If so, would it not be ridiculous, nay, hideously unnatural if suffering from intense hunger I were to go to one of your professors of logic, and say, "Good Sir, please demonstrate to me, on strictly philosophical grounds, the propriety of asking for food before I go to any body for it—for I must satisfy my logical faculties ere I do any thing?"

I.—Really that would be ridiculous, nay, it would be sheer madness to do so. All this I admit, and, I think, any body who has common sense would admit it. But you have not solved the main problem—to wit, the philosophical validity of prayer to God. Do you mean to extend the arguments which you have adduced in the case of eating and drinking to spiritual prayers to God?

B.—Certainly. For what is prayer in the theological acceptance of the term? Have you not already defined it to be a petition to God for the removal of spiritual wants? If so, it is evident that the arguments I have already advanced apply to it with full force. As I ask mortal man for food because it is essential to the sustenance of my body, so I pray to my God for spiritual blessings which are essential to the sustenance of my soul. In both cases a deep want, a pressing and irresistible necessity is the origin of prayer: in neither is there any reference to logic.

I.—You should be more explicit.

B.—The sinner remorsefully awakened to

corruptions and iniquities of his life, smarts day and night under the compunctions of conscience, feels the want of deliverance, and looking up to the All-Merciful, humbly prays :—“ Lord, deliver me from my sins, relieve me from the agonies of remorse. O Thou Merciful Saviour ! save me, for I am intensely suffering.” He who beset with a host of powerful temptations becomes unsteady, and vacillates between desire and duty, feels his own weakness and incompetency, and, thoroughly bewildered and confounded, kneels down before the Almighty, and says :—“ Inspire me, God Almighty ! with strength and energy that I may triumph over temptations, and preserve my soul safe against their encroachments. I am weak : my heart fails me. O Lord, make me strong that I may never swerve from Thee.” The virtuous man, visited with a severe calamity, feels himself cast down, loses the sweet serenity of his soul, and prayerfully says to God :—“ O Thou Father of the fatherless ! O Thou Helper of the helpless ! lay on my troubled heart Thy balmy hands. Vouchsafe unto me forbearance and patience, that I may meekly suffer all calamities, and glorify Thee even in the midst of tribulation.” The persecuted missionary lifts his eyes to the Lord, and prays :—“ Holy God ! reveal Thy benign face unto me, and fill me with courage and enthusiasm. Thousands of enemies are around me, and are ever and anon hurling the deadly arrows of persecution against me. Fix

my heart in Thee, O Lord, that the face of mortal man may not daunt me. Make truth dearer to me than life." Consider these cases, my good friend, and say, whether such prayers are the elaborated results of logic, or whether they are not, like prayers for bodily necessities, the spontaneous outpourings of our nature. Hath not the soul its hungerings and thirstings as the body hath? Does not man spontaneously pray for physical as well as spiritual sustenance and health? When the body aileth do we not implore the physician to give us aid? When the soul is diseased, do we not pray to the Healer of the soul for relief, and health? When the child is hungry does it not instinctively run to its affectionate father, and cry for food? When our souls hunger after righteousness do we not instinctively run to our Supreme Father, and beseech Him to feed us and nourish us? If you ask me why I pray to God, I will say—not because logic or psychology teaches me to do so—not because my schoolmaster insists on my doing so, but because the deep wants of my soul drive me to the necessity of praying to Him Who is my Father and my Friend. And if your profound logicians attempt to deter me from prayer, on the ground of what they generally call its philosophical fallacy, I shall say unto them,—Can ye prevent the hungry from asking for food? Ye cannot then prevent the soul from praying for the "bread of life."

I.—No more, no more. I am convinced that prayer is not the result of logical processes. It is but a wish of the heart—an expression of the soul's wants. It is a prompting of our spiritual instincts.

B.—If so, would it not be ridiculous for me to come to you, and say :—"Demonstrate to me the philosophical propriety of prayer ere you can expect me to adopt it : for as a reasonable creature I must satisfy my reason ere I do any thing."

I.—Verily as ridiculous as the case you have already mentioned, where the hungry look for syllogistical arguments to be convinced that they ought to ask for food. So far, well. I fully admit that prayer is spontaneous, and not reflective. But what if it is spontaneous? I question its uses. You may say you are impelled by want to pray to God : but I feel no such want, I feel no necessity for prayer. How then can I reasonably engage myself in it unless you can satisfactorily prove its utility? Surely, I ought not to pray unless I am assured that I will bring home some good thereby. What imaginable good can accrue from your mutterings, your half-shut eyes, your limbs screwed up in a stiff and uncomfortable kneeling posture? Discharge your duties, strive to keep a pure heart and a clean conscience, and do good to your brethren : this is all that you have to do, if you wish to be really good and great ; and for all that I would be the first person to give you credit.

But it is shocking to see men of good sense addressing the air for hours together, and giving away their earnestness to the winds, and thus making a sad waste of their energies and time. Let theologians say what they will, I cannot but deny the utility of prayer, and steadfastly maintain that men may be religious and virtuous without any prayer. Witness some of the great men of our country : they do not pray, for they think it unreasonable and unnecessary to pray and yet they possess a commendable character ; they are honest, benevolent, and philanthropic souls.

B.—How can you say that prayer is useless if you have never personally tried its utility ? Would it not be absurd if having never tasted sugar I were to say it produces a sensation of bitterness ? Let those only who have prayed say, whether prayer produces any beneficial effects or not, and whether they can do away with it in their religious pursuits. Do you think that man can be religious without prayer ? Is not that a mere assumption ? I had rather believe that the world can exist without God—that a house can stand without a basis—that man can live without life, than that religion can exist without prayer. For what is religion ? Is it the pompous distribution of alms to thousands of indigent men ? Is it the inauguration of a magnificent college, or the promotion of a social reform ? Is it mere charity, or meekness, or compassion, or civility ? Indeed a man may have

one or all of these qualities, and yet he may not be religious. That man is religious who does every thing for his salvation, who has made God the centre of all his thoughts and feelings and words and actions. That man is religious who has triumphed over the world, and consecrated his soul to God. There is in man an incessant struggle between the world and God, desire and duty, the senses and the soul, flesh and spirit ; and it is in the triumph of the latter over the former that religion consists. If this is religion, say—can any one attain to it without prayer ? Can man buffet the formidable waves of worldliness without invoking the Divine aid ? Can he, in the dreadful battle-field of life successfully shield himself from all the assaults of sin, and baffle the artful manœuvres of temptations by his unaided exertions alone ? Can he establish the kingdom of holiness in his heart without the aid of the Fountain of Holiness ? Oh no, my friend, his unaided energies are not equal to so hard a fight—so awful a trial. Being in the midst of the darkness of the world—let him possess ever so many good qualities—man cannot enjoy godliness without God's aid. But should you persist in believing otherwise, as well might you maintain that when scorched by the rays of the torrid sun you can feel the sensation of cold, or when completely benumbed by freezing cold you can feel the sensation of heat. Ask that man who is just reclaimed from sin why he prays, and he will tell you, it is not

possible to become pious without Divine aid. Ask that man who has made much progress in religion why he prays, and he will say, it is not possible to sustain piety without Divine aid. With prayer you must begin religion, with prayer you must continue it. As a nurse, prayer fosters and nourishes religion in its infancy ; as a faithful friend, it encourages and helps it in its manhood ; and as a physician, it restores its healthful tone when it is deranged. Thus whatever stage of religion we view, we find prayer is essential to it. Prayer is the life of religion. It is the "pillar of religion, the key of paradise"—so says the Koran. Take away prayer, and our religious constitution, deprived of its life-blood, soon becomes extinct. O my friend, we must needs pray to God. He is our all. Wherein lies the strength of infants but in weeping and crying before their parents ? Wherein lies our strength but in praying to our Father ? O what priceless treasures does prayer bring to us ! How affectionately does our Loving Father listen to our prayers, and supply our spiritual wants ! Think not, my friend, that we address the winds, that our prayers are driven back upon us, and bring home no good. Out of His inexhaustible store house of blessings doth the Merciful God always give whatsoever His prayerful children want. Whoever humbly approacheth Him, and sincerely prayeth, returneth with abundant blessings. Prayer makes the weak powerful, the timid heroic, the dejected

hopeful, the corrupt righteous, and the ignorant wise. Prayer wipes off the tears from the cheek of the afflicted, converts the gloomy caverns of penury into abodes of prosperity and peace, crowns the head of the child of Adversity with the royal diadem. Prayer removes impurities from the sinner's heart, and drags him away from the hall of sensual extravagances into the holy mansions of God. Prayer is the light of the bewildered sojourner in life's mazy path. It is the buoy which the unfortunate soul, carried adrift along the violent currents of worldliness, may take hold of, and be saved from sinking. It is the staff of the weak, the old, and the helpless. It is the holy minister of religion that solves the doubts of inquirers, teaches saving truths, and fills the soul with faith. It is the lovely angel that strews over death-bed the flowers of joy and hope, comfort and peace, and conveys the departing soul adorned with heavenly graces to the blessed regions of immortality. At once our light and strength, our friend and instructor, it leads us "from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality." Prayer lifts the soul above the platform of all that is earthly, corrupt and mean, and ushers it into the very presence of the All-Holy. When we are brought into His holy presence, the sins and sorrows and vexations of the world cannot encroach upon us, its perishable splendours cannot allure us, we are above its sin and temptations; the soul feels itself in

the midst of Holiness and Purity, drinks the sweets of pure divine communion, and enjoys a serenity and a bliss unspeakable. It forgets its own weakness and infirmities, and is inspired with heavenly fire and enthusiasm. Thus inspired, man walks in the path of life with invincible courage and unyielding resoluteness—fearing no earthly potentate, for Omnipotence is on his side, yet loving all for his soul is filled with brotherly affection—magnifying the name of his Creator with fiery eloquence ; and at last closes his earthly career amidst joy and glory immeasurable, chanting hosannas to the All-Holy. Such are the salutary effects of prayer. Such is the beatific life of the prayer ! Oh I grieve to see one disparage prayer—that inestimably precious gift of Providence. Deprive me not, I beseech you, ye who scoff at prayer, deprive me not of that precious gift—that dear treasure of my heart. Raise not your ruthless hands to sacrifice the true life and vitality of my soul. Nurtured in the bosom of Prayer may I remain faithful to her for ever and ever. May the Lord teach me to pray without ceasing, to live and die in prayer. May He help me to seek Him prayerfully, and abide in Him prayerfully.

I.—Blessed are they who pray to God, for they enjoy a heavenly life ! Blessed are those tender, innocent, and simple souls that spontaneously run to their Father's feet, tell Him their wants, and are fed and nourished by Him. Oh how happy they are ! How enviable their

lot! O brother, what a precious and saving lesson have you given me this day! Be it my ambition henceforward to be included among God's prayerful children; be it my desire and pleasure to offer my heart's prayers to Him every day, that I may daily grow in wisdom and purity and faith. Up, up, my soul, from the slough of prayerlessness. Fling away thy arrogance, thy impious pride, and with prayerful humility kneel down before thy Father.

"Oh Lord, I have dishonored Thee. Pride hath ruined me by leading me astray. Forgive me, Merciful Lord! I beseech Thee. Thou art my Father: teach me, Thy corrupt child, to pray unto Thee all the days I live. Help me Lord. O help me."

B.—May God satisfy your spiritual aspirations, my beloved brother! Repose your faith in Him, and He will bless you, and help you on.

RELIGION OF LOVE.

LOVE EVERY MAN AS THY BROTHER.

No. 3.]

[August 1860.

I.—Since you convinced me of the importance of prayer I have been earnestly endeavouring to cultivate a habit of prayerfulness,—and, oh! how many struggles, difficulties, and anxieties have embarrassed my heart. My thoughts and feelings have all been bestirred to a state of excitement and warfare which I cannot well describe; my whole spiritual constitution has been convulsed by some mysterious agency. Yet, however,—thanks to your salutary precepts—despite all struggles and agitation, the sweet pleasures of growing religion have soothed my heart. Many a temptation I have had to sacrifice, many a favourite pursuit to relinquish, many a pleading of the heart for carnal enjoyments to overcome; and each such successful achievement has been a source of pleasure in nowise earthly. Firm now is my conviction, my good friend, that prayer is beneficial—that in a devotional attitude at the feet of the Holy Father the soul realizes precious blessings which metaphysical heads may deny, but which those who have enjoyed them shall always value and vindicate. May those of my intelligent countrymen who

scoff at prayer try its uses on the ground of experience, instead of theorizing on the subject in a spirit of sarcasm !

B.—Oh for the day when my enlightened countrymen shall be a prayerful brotherhood ! In the present diseased state of our society prayer shall be as the sovereign remedy. It shall enlighten, ennoble and regenerate our country. May Providence send that blessing to this wretched land, and thereby rescue its people from the countless evils under which they are groaning !

I.—I owe you, my friend, a “debt immense of endless gratitude,” for I feel that you have not merely initiated me in one particular virtue—namely prayer, but you have placed my whole soul in the way of salvation. But hear me, my good friend, a serious difficulty has lately come across my path. I have been sorely perplexed with considerations about the choice of a creed. I have heard an orthodox Hindoo say—Of what avail is prayer if not accompanied with the offering of holy flowers to Durga and Kalee ? I have heard many a Christian say—Engage in prayers and devotion every day, every hour, if you choose ; do any thing for your soul’s improvement, there is no hope of salvation unless you believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ. So each creed identifying religion with its own dogmas seeks to drive me away from all hopes of religious improvement. So each church reckoning itself the only accredited dispenser of salvation summarily consigns the lot of every dissenter to perdition.

Thus° alas! my prayerfulness seems unavailing. In vain have I traversed the vast field of theology to find an undisputed creed. Worried and hopeless I now sit down with the conviction that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye" than for an impartial inquirer to find a resting-place in the tumultuous sea of theological polemics, where he can say to his heart's content—This is the happy land of true religion. Tell me, friend, what your ideas are on this important subject, for I deeply feel the necessity of establishing my heart upon some fixed system of faith.

B.—That resting-place, O my brother, which your troubled heart is searching for is Brahmoism. In that heaven-born religion you shall find peace and comfort, truth for your understanding and salvation for your soul—

I.—That is the very language of sectarianism; the stamp of bigotry lies on its face. Heaven-born religion! Truth for the understanding, and salvation for the soul!—So every sectarian speaks of his own faith. Indeed he who is in quest of true faith goes as if through a market where each creed-monger comes with his own creed, holds it up as the best, and abuses his neighbour should he decry its worth: there is no creed which is not heaven-born, there is none which is not the only way to salvation;—so that the unfortunate inquirer is obliged to return filled with vexation, disappointment and despair. Oh! it is ridiculous—it is shocking.

Excuse me, my friend, your bigoted adherence to your own religious system is no reason why I should embrace it, for on that ground I have to embrace and reject by turns all those systems of religion which prevail in the world. Think not that I say so from any special prepossessions against your creed. Impartially examine the religious history of the world, and tell me does it not at once throw the mind into confusion and bewilderment. What a countless number of churches, sects and creeds does it exhibit ! What an endless variety of doctrines and tenets, rituals and modes of worship ! What an appalling spectacle of strifes, schisms, and even war, massacre, and bloodshed ! Hindooism and Islamism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, Methodism and Socinianism, Trinitarianism and Unitarianism, and thousand other *isms* are hotly engaged, with weapons offensive and defensive, in establishing their divine origin and infallibility ! Revelations arrayed against revelations, incarnations against incarnations, miracles against miracles, infallibilities against infallibilities, pulpits against pulpits, missionaries against missionaries, tracts against tracts ! Inexplicable anomalies ! From such unaccountable phenomena to evolve a meaning, from such a chaotic confusion to bring out order and light is a task which defies human reason.

B.—Certainly. Whoever goes through the awful perplexities of theological polemics in order to ascertain and enjoy true faith must pass his

„days in fruitless speculations ; nay he may perchance be eventually enshrouded and entombed amidst the horrors of despairing unbelief. Woe to the unfortunate inquirer after true religion who reposes his faith in the decisions of synods and churches ! Indeed many a simple heart is ready to resound the voice of A. Kempis :—“ I am weary of reading, I am weary of hearing ; in Thee alone (O God) is the sum of my desires. Let all teachers be silent, let the whole creation be dumb before Thee, and do Thou only speak to my soul.”

I.—What then is to be done ? To tell you frankly, although my religious sentiments animate me and comfort me, they can hardly prevent clouds of doubt from overhanging my mind when I see the outward phenomena of the religious world ; and sometimes I have been even driven to confess that religion is a mystery, and its history a mere chronicle of anomalies, persecution, conflicts, and war. Tell me, good friend, as an unbiassed and truth-loving soul, and not as a bigoted sectarian, what I ought to do in respect to the choice of a religion. Where shall I find rest ? Where shall I enjoy peace ?

B.—In Brahmoism, in the sweet religion of Brahmoism. Speak not to me of sects and parties. I cannot recommend you to sever yourself from the mass of mankind, and cling to an exclusive creed. Away with sectarian creeds and dogmas ; away with the malign spirit of sectarianism.

I.—If I have to turn away from sectarian creeds, with what earthly reason can I accept Brahmoism? Is not Brahmoism a special creed like Hindooism and Christianity and Mahomedanism? Do not the Brahmos, like the followers of other religions, constitute a sect?

B.—O no, my friend. Brahmoism is anti-sectarian; catholicity is its distinguishing characteristic; love is its very life. It is not the religion of a particular community, epoch or country; it is universal religion; it is "Human Catholic Religion." It is this which clearly distinguishes Brahmoism from all systems of faith. While they are founded upon the peculiarities of time and place, Brahmoism stands upon a basis coextensive with human nature—upon principles that are catholic and universal. While they seek to divide mankind into distinct and hostile parties, Brahmoism goes forth to bring all mankind to a state of unity and harmony. While they confine their love within their own respective sects, Brahmoism extends the holy current of love to the whole human race. Sectarianism limits and distorts man's views and sentiments; Brahmoism expands his soul and enlarges his conceptions. The former is a battle-field in which communities strenuously fight against each other, actuated by inveterate jealousy or the maddening spirit of fanaticism. The latter is the kingdom of peace in which all mankind are a brotherhood, and love reigns supreme. O what a prodigious havoc has sectarianism made in the world!

What inhuman deeds, what appalling atrocities have not been committed by it? The rack, the guillotine, and all sorts of powerful engines of torture and destruction have been pressed to its service. Amidst war-cries, shrieks of woe, and groanings of despair, its triumph has been celebrated; its banners have been crimsoned with the blood of thousands. It is profoundly distressing to witness such a scene. Such is the history of sectarianism. To-day, as in ancient times, its spirit is the same. Civilization has not exterminated it, it has only rendered its manifestations less revolting and hideous. Bickerings, jealousy, mutual antipathy and even fanatical abhorrence shed their baneful effects far and wide; the press teems with works full of acrimonious abuse, defamation and anathemas. Opinion is all in all; the virtues of a dissenter and the vices of an adherent are looked upon with comparative indifference; to say yea or nay to a dogma is sufficient to insure the verdict of salvation or perdition; the triumph of a party is more eagerly sought for than the moral and religious amelioration of mankind; church establishments, instead of harmoniously and earnestly co-operating to promote the true interests of the people, are busily employed about matters of etymology and ethnology, geography and tradition; and while untold millions are sinking in corruption and iniquity, ministers of religion, and guardians of churches, oblivious of their sacred responsibilities, are fulminating anathe-

mas against each other. O my friend, be not a sectarian. Sectarianism is opposed to the very vital principle of religion,—to wit, love. Sacrifice all that is exclusive, narrow, and antagonistic—sacrifice all prejudices for time, place, and party—sacrifice all that soweth discord and unbrotherly feelings between man and man, if you seek true religion, for true religion is universal love. How can you hate others, treat them spitefully, and separate yourself from them, in the name of religion—in the name of that whose very essence is—Love God as thy Father, and man as thy brother? Certainly the object of religion is to unite and bring together—not to separate; to consolidate the whole mass of mankind—not to divide it into countless sections; to annihilate, not to raise partitions; to attract, not repel; to make a brother, not an enemy. This is the very object of Brahmoism, that sweet religion of universal love. Her mission is to summon together the various sections of humanity, and establish among them a peaceful and blessed brotherhood. Love, union and peace are her watchwords. A Brahmo sees all men in relation to God. “He sees all in God and God in all and despiseth none.” His soul is full of love, and he hails and hugs every man as his dear brother, in spite of all differences of denomination and creed, caste and colour. He is above party-spirit, the peculiarities of country and age cannot fetter his mind. The world is his home—the human race his family—God his

Father. O how sweet his brotherly love ! how exalting, and ennobling its influences ! Cutting asunder all artificial and dogmatic bonds, it teaches man to realize his natural relations, and affectionately discharge the duties which he owes to his Father and to his brethren. Before that sacred feeling whatever is low, narrow, and earthy flies away as mists before the morning sun ;—jealousy, hatred, antipathy, selfishness, and all those evil passions which embitter life, and separate man from man at once disappear—the joys of heaven overflow the soul—duty becomes agreeable, and virtue amiable. Blessed are they whose hearts are filled with the sweets of brotherly love ! Verily it is “heaven upon earth” to live in a state of brotherhood. Oh when shall that day of universal peace and joy arrive, when every man shall exclaim from the depth of his heart :—God is my Father, man is my brother ? Say, is not a Christian, a Hindoo, a Mahomedan, your brother ? Is not every man, whether an inhabitant of Africa or Asia, Europe or America born of the same Father ? Are not the white and the black races both works of His hand ? Is He not the Father of the rich and the poor, the wise and the illiterate ? Is He not my Father, your Father, and the Father of all men besides ? If so then perish sectarianism from the face of the earth—perish all that fosters discord and strife among mankind—perish all that rends God’s holy family into antagonistic sects—perish all that prevents the kingdom of religion from being the abode of

heavenly love, the land of holy alliance! • Say with a loving heart unto Christians, Hindoos, Mahomedans and Buddhists—come all ye religious sects—let us all fling away sectarian opinions, sectarian antagonisms, sectarian bigotry, and meet together on the common ground of Universal Religion. Children of God! beloved brethren! come let us all rally round the holy standard of our common Father, and glorify His name. Brahmoism! O thou sweet religion of heaven! Unfurl thy banners of love and peace, and bind all countries and nations by the sacred ties of brotherly affection. May thy kingdom day by day extend over the whole world, and may all nations unite in a holy chorus, and joyfully chant the sweet anthem—"The Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man."

I.—Certainly, my friend, the spirit of sectarianism is hostile to religion, and methinks religion and universal love are so vitally connected with each other that the former cannot exist without the latter. If then Brahmoism seeks to turn away men from sectarian wrangling and dogmatic warfare, and establish among them a peaceful brotherhood, there is no question but that it has a sacred and heavenly mission to fulfil. So far Brahmoism recommends itself to the faith of every unprejudiced soul. But all that you have said proves only the purity of Brahmic *feeling*: and unless I am also satisfied with the *doctrines* and *tenets* of your religion, I must hesitate to accept it. There are diverse knotty ques-

tions, such as those of revelation, atonement, salvation, &c., which must be thoroughly sifted ere any one can form a correct idea of your creed.

B.—I shall try my best, beloved friend, to satisfy you, but as the subject is too comprehensive and important to be disposed of in a few words, we may put it off till our next interview.

BASIS OF BRAHMOISM.

BRAHMOISM STANDS UPON THE ROCK OF INTUITION
AND IS ABOVE THE FLUCTUATIONS OF
SECTARIAN OPINIONS.

No. 4.]

[September 1860.

I.—I must confess, my friend, that although I had formerly a very low opinion of your creed, the simple argument which you so clearly and elaborately expounded the other day, viz—that Brahmoism is a catholic and anti-sectarian creed, has drawn my heart towards it. But, as I have already told you, it is only with regard to the feeling of love which it cherishes that I am prepared to admit the excellence of your religion. You must allow me now to understand your doctrines, that I may impartially ascertain whether Brahmoism unites Love and Truth—whether it consists with reason at the same time that it satisfies the heart.

B.—I deeply rejoice that you have felt a desire to investigate the holy doctrines of Brahmoism. May Providence enable you to gratify your desire, and may He lead your truth-seeking mind to truth! Well tell me what doctrine you wish me to explain to you.

I.—Before you proceed to the exposition of any particular doctrine, I wish you will enlighten

me on the foundation of Brahmoism ; for it may be that your creed is base-less—a castle built upon the air. In such matters methinks it is our duty to look into the basis ere we examine the superstructure. I am the more inclined to take up this topic in the outset, as I have come to learn that Brahmoism stands upon no book-revelation ; it is a religion with a fixed Word of God to rest upon. Upon what then is it founded ? From what source does it derive its tenets ? One must naturally suspect your creed is but a congeries of doctrines and theories, drawn up by a few Hindu minds in conformity with their own ideas and tastes,—or at best a compilation of doctrines from this book and that ; so that destitute of a fixed basis it must necessarily be dependent upon circumstances, and liable to be agitated by controversies, modified by opinions, and perhaps destroyed by advanced intelligence.

B.—True, Brahmoism rests on no written revelation ; neither does it hang on the opinions of particular persons or communities. It depends not upon the fugitive phenomena incident to age or country. Its basis is in the depths of human nature.

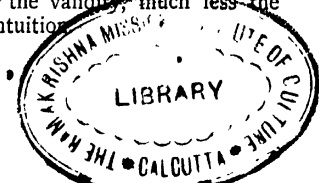
I.—Really I cannot understand how a religion which recognises no revelation, and which depends wholly upon the mind can be said to stand upon a fixed foundation. To rest a faith upon the fleeting phenomena of the mind is but to rest it upon an ever-shifting basis. Do not

material differences exist among men with regard to almost every subject of reflection and thought? Does not even the same mind display countless phases of opinion at different times?

B.—Yes, reflection and judgment do differ; opinions do vary. But Brahmoism is founded upon those principles of the mind which are above, anterior to, and independent of reflection—which the variations of opinion cannot alter or affect. It stands upon intuitions.

I.—What! Intuitions! Do you mean to say that there are some principles in the mind which do not depend upon reflection? I am afraid what you say is a curious accommodation of philosophy to your creed, and I for one must protest against it. It is ridiculous to see people, in default of a principle upon which to establish the basis of their religion, fabricate one by their own ignuinity in defiance of all philosophy. It is a pity that theology should thus run counter to philosophy. Don't you think it is an undeniable fact that all truths are the results of reflection? However let me know, what is that particular principle of the mind which you call intuition.

B.—Intuition denotes those cognitions which our nature immediately apprehends—those truths which we perceive independently of reflection. Are you not aware that our intelligent nature has two departments—the intuitive and reflective? Surely you should not as an advocate of philosophy deny the validity, much less the very existence of intuition.



I.—It would be useless to cavil in this way. I wish you would prove at once a single fact of our intellectual consciousness—a single cognition—a single truth which does not result from reflection, but is, as you say, immediately cognizable.

B.—To take the simplest case, tell me how you get at the knowledge of self. Is not this an immediate and spontaneous cognition? Do you arrive at it through any logical formula? Tell me likewise how you come to know the reality of the external world. Is it not true that logic can never give you this knowledge? When you see a rose, all that you are conscious of is the sensation of that rose; but how could you, even if all the principles of logic were pressed to your service, infer from that sensation the existence of a real rose outside? Is not the reality of external objects immediately cognizable by all men? Tell me also whence comes your belief that every object is a substance, if nothing can be known of it through the senses beyond a number of qualities. How do you know that every effect has a cause? It is needless to multiply instances; those already adduced will, I hope, convince you that some of our cognitions are not the results of reflection.

I.—I cannot but admit that the truths you have alluded to are immediately cognizable, and independent of reasoning. Are they not identical with the First Truths of certain philosophers?

B.—Yes. * You may call them intuition or

First Truths as you choose ; it is a mere matter of nomenclature. They have been variously designated by philosophers. The fact is that intuition has several distinguishing characteristics, according to which it has received corresponding names.

I.—Will you just proceed to explain these characteristics ?

B.—Most cheerfully, but the subject is so comprehensive that I can give you at present only the general outlines of it. The first mark of intuition is, as I have already intimated, immediacy. Intuitive truth is directly cognizable ; it is seen face to face ; it is perceptible, if I may apply the word to spiritual objects. Cause, substance, power infinite, duty, are all immediately apprehensible : no reflection can give us these ideas. Hence some philosophers have applied the term Sense to intuition. We often meet with such expressions as Moral Sense, Sense of Duty, Spiritual Sense, Senses of the Soul, clearly indicating that as by the bodily eye we see outward objects, so by intuition we see spiritual realities. Another mark of intuition is spontaneity. The mind apprehends intuitive truths spontaneously, instinctively, without any voluntary effort. They spring out-right from our nature ; they are not wrought out by reasoning. They are facts of our constitution ; we cannot create or destroy them if we will ; they do not depend upon the fiat of our volitions. Hence though we may ignore them in theory

oftentimes they are found to govern us practically. Metaphysical theorists held for a long time the ideality of external objects, but there is hardly a sane man who practically adheres to this shocking theory. Some people seem to deny God, and bring forward various arguments to show the plausibility of such denial, but often do circumstances occur in which the intuitions force themselves up from the depths of their constitution, and vindicate their rights with a practical potency which theories in vain try to gainsay. The personality of our nature many have denied, and yet every man practically believes that there are actions which he may do or not do as he chooses. Thus you see that intuition is spontaneous, natural, involuntary, permanent and practical. Hence it has been denominated Spontaneous Reason, Natural Light, Instinctive Beliefs, Practical Reason &c. Another mark of intuition is universality. If intuitive truths are facts of our nature, and are independent of our will, they are universal. They are in the possession of the wise and the illiterate—of the rich and the poor. Hence they have been called Catholic Convictions, Common Sense. Another mark of intuition is originality. Intuitive truths are not inferences from certain premises. They are primitive truths; they do not originate in reflection. They furnish materials for reasoning and scientific reflection—themselves undeived and primitive. They are the starting-points of all our higher knowledge, as sensations

are of all inferior knowledge. Hence they have been styled First Truths, Primitive Cognitions. The last characteristic I have to mention is that intuitions are self-evident. They are axiomatic truths which do not admit of demonstration. Every effect must have a cause—is a proposition the truth of which no one disputes, yet no one can demonstrate. Intuitions require no light of evidence to exhibit them: they shine in their own light. They are accordingly not merely cognitions but convictions and beliefs. We not only know, but firmly believe, that every effect has a cause, that good should be done, and evil avoided &c. Hence intuitions have been termed *A priori* Truth, Axioms, Faith. These are the principal characteristics of intuitive cognitions. I presume you are now prepared to determine whether intuition is a fact of consciousness or not.

I.—Not until you convince me that the doctrine of intuition stands upon the authority of eminent philosophers. For that doctrine may be for aught I know a relic of some of those false systems of metaphysics which have been superseded by the purer philosophy of modern times. Can you show on reliable authority that it is in harmony with true and universal philosophy?

B.—I could cite innumerable testimonies in favor of that doctrine from ancient as well as modern philosophy. I will enumerate only the principal ones for our present purpose. Among the ancients you will find Socrates, Plato, Cicero and Aristotle; among the moderns Des Cartes,

Kant, Reid, Dugald Stewart, Malbranche, Victor Cousin, Coleridge, Morell, M'Cosh, and even that unrivalled thinker, Sir William Hamilton :—so that there is scarcely any philosopher of celebrity in ancient or modern times—excepting of course the materialistic school—who does not in some shape or other afford his testimony in support of the doctrine of intuition. The fact is that philosophy far from being inimical to this doctrine is suicidal without it ; her legitimate province being simply the investigation and application of the intuitions of the mind. Is not the doctrine of intuition then the true and abiding philosophy ? “The doctrine of common sense,” says Hamilton, “is the one catholic and perennial philosophy.”

I.—I have no objection to urge against the philosophical validity of the doctrine of intuition. But how would you apply it to the subject under consideration, viz—the basis of your religion ?

B.—I'll tell you presently. You will admit, I presume, from what I have said that there are two distinct kinds of knowledge—the one dependent upon the arbitrary use of our individual judgments, and therefore variable and contingent, the other above and independent of reasoning, and therefore universal and permanent ; so that amidst the innumerable varieties of opinion among men there is the fixed ground of intuitive conviction. You have no doubt respecting this ;—have you ?

I.—Not the least.

B.—You can easily understand then, I sup-

pose, how what you have admitted with regard to knowledge in general applies to religious knowledge. When religion lies in our intuitive consciousness, its truths we directly perceive, we require no argumentation, they approach us as self-evident realities. But when it passes on to our reflective consciousness we exercise our respective judgments and form different theories. In the one case nature is our guide and authority ; in the other our arbitrary judgment. In the one case no evidence is needed ; in the other we call for demonstration, we must sift the premises ere we accept the conclusion. In the sphere of intuition religion is natural, spontaneous, catholic, and living : in the sphere of reflection it is apt to become abnormal, sectarian, and dogmatic. Intuitive religion is a direct revelation of truths. It does not derive its doctrines from books or men ; it is a code of primitive truths—the teachings of nature. It involves nothing peculiar to individuals of communities ; it stands upon the universal consciousness of humanity. Thus stands Brahmoism—heaven-born and eternal Theism—far above the peculiarities of age and country and the infinite diversities of theological opinion.

I.—How can Brahmoism be universal and eternal when there are so many churches in the world ? Your assertion looks very well in theory, but it does not hold good practically. How do you account for this anomaly ?

B.—As in the mind of the individual there are

on the one side natural and spontaneous beliefs, which constitute the identity of his nature with that of other men, and on the other his own judgments and opinions which are peculiar to him or to a particular sect ; so in the consciousness of humanity there is the deep-rooted religion of intuition in spite of the shifting phenomena of sectarian polemics. Creeds rise and fall, churches flourish and fade, as opinions change and judgments are modified ; but intuitive religion always abides—unextinguished and unextinguishable. Individuals may hold fast to unnatural dogmas, nations may fall prostrate before unnatural systems of religion, but human nature is not thereby annihilated, not a single truth of intuition is lost. Psychology shows us the fact that there are two distinct spheres of religious knowledge in the individual—the intuitive and the reflective. History illustrates it and verifies it in the actual religious beliefs and pursuits of mankind at large. Thus what you see in the individual in miniature you see largely in the history of humanity, for history is but the stage on which the internal principles of the mind exhibit themselves and play their parts. It is quite evident then that it is arbitrary reflection on the one hand which lies at the bottom of religious polemics—of differences, schisms and sectarian antagonisms. It is intuition on the other hand which lies underneath those immutable and eternal truths which belong to all mankind, transcend the peculiarities

of time and place, survive all vicissitudes and revolutions, buoy up above the fluctuations of sectarian opinions, and often shed their holy effulgence through the surrounding gloom of the grossest superstition and idolatry.

I.—I have nothing more to say in reference to the philosophy of the subject under discussion. But it strikes me that your religion thus exalted above all external and tangible things, above book-revelations and outward authority has too much of abstraction in it, and is thereby practically powerless and ineffectual. It wants that capacity of "coming home to our bosom and business," and exerting living influence on our soul, which less abstract religions possess.

B.—Tell me not that Brahmoism is a religion of abstractions. The very reverse is the fact. Brahmoism is a living religion. It reveals truth immediately, and with all the vividness and force of direct perception. How animating for example is a Brahmo's knowledge of God! He does not seek God through abstractions and generalizations. He has not to carve out his God by the chisel of logic; he does not worship an abstract metaphysical ideal of the Divinity, destitute of charms, and lifeless. Nor on the other hand is his God a historical personage, cognizable through the medium of representation and with the aid of proper evidences—and withal a God "that *was* but not *is*." His God is neither a logical nor historical divinity. His God is an ever-living and ever-present Reality

that can be seen and felt. No teacher, no idea, no abstract proposition, no consecrated object acts as a mediator between him and God. He stands before his Father face to face. He beholds Him who is infinite in time and space, wisdom and power, love and holiness, and is at once enlivened and enraptured; then the clouds of doubt fly away, the soul is armed with indomitable faith, all the spiritual energies are quickened, and love and joy sweeten the heart: then the soul falls at the feet of the All-Holy, saying—Life of my life! how sweet is it to enjoy Thy presence and be encircled by Thy loving arms! Blessed are they who instead of seeking God in books and abstract formularies—in the distance of space and time, see His loving face in the depths of their heart. Tell me now is not Brahmoism a living religion; do not its doctrines come home to us?

I.—Do you think your remarks are applicable to the intelligent as well as the illiterate? How can the latter who know nothing about the doctrine of intuition realize the living influence of your creed?

B.—You will easily understand that if you remember that Brahmoism is catholic. As by reason of the immediacy and spontaneity of its cognitions Brahmoism is a living faith, and not a religion of abstractions; so by reason of their universality it is accessible to all. True the philosophy of intuition is limited to a few, for every man is not a philosopher. But intuition

itself is universal property; its truths are the patrimony of the human race. *Brahmoism* is co-extensive with human nature, though a few only can master *Brahmic theology*. Brahmoism is not confined to metaphysicians or historians. Metaphysical training is not an indispensable requisite to the knowledge of its truths; scholarship is not the *sine qua non* of admission into our faith. Nature is the preceptor and the guide, she leads every simple, unsophisticated, and unbiassed man into the shrine of Brahmoism. The universe is the cathedral, nature the high-priest,—every man, whether an illiterate rustic or a profound philosopher, a throned monarch or a ragged clown, a native of Europe or of India, a man of the first or the nineteenth century, has access to his Father, and can worship and serve Him with faith and love. Do you suppose, my friend, that the God of Love reveals Himself only to those who possess the means of a rich education and who have health and strength sufficient to take advantage of such means? Are wealth, influence, and academic lore the price of truth? If so, what an overwhelming majority of the human race, alas! are destined to live and die in spiritual ignorance! Has our Father provided nothing for their enlightenment; has He appointed no light to guide the untold millions of the lower and poorer classes of men? Adversity may darken the life of man, earthly teachers may forsake him, pulpits may be out of his reach, the light of education he may never

enjoy—but what of that? Can penury estrange him from the Great Teacher? No. In the school of nature the poor rustic trains himself to the holy truths of religion, and learns to guide the vessel of life with the aid of piety and faith; nay his simple mind oftentimes displays a fervent and burning faith in God and the immortality of the soul, in comparison with which the most rigid and demonstrative conclusions of academic theology appear lifeless. O my friend, the Gracious Lord doth not forsake the poor. The heights of philosophy are not accessible to all; theological learning is a rare acquirement: but the vital truths of religion are attainable by all. That God is—that He is infinite in love, wisdom, and holiness—that there is a future state of existence, are first truths which do not require logic to comprehend. The deep problems of reflection may not be solvable by all; the living truths of intuition God hath given all men the means of knowing. In the depths of the soul hath He written in imperishable characters the simple doctrines of Theism which every one true to his nature may read.

Behold then the grand final cause of this arrangement in our cognitive nature separating the intuitive from the reflective department of knowledge. What a wonderful proof of Divine goodness does it afford! Imagine how unfortunate a creature would man have been had the vital functions of his bodily organism depended upon his will. Would we not have been every

moment liable to death if respiration and the circulation of blood were to take place like the movements of our hands and feet, only when willed? But such is not the case. By the providence of God the lungs continually inhale and exhale air, the vital fluid unceasingly performs its work independently of our will. When we are engrossed in business, when anxieties perturb the heart, and make us forget body, when death-like sleep reduces us to an unconscious state, the God of Love conducts with his hands the internal vital machinery of the body. So has He in His infinite wisdom placed the vital truths of religion above the reach of our will. In what an awful state would humanity have been if truth were yours or mine, if it depended upon the arbitrary decisions of individual judgments and the varying breath of popular opinion. But—blessed be the Merciful Lord—such is not the case. Let prejudices and errors overpower the individual mind, let revolutions after revolutions shake communities, let corrupt doctrines hallowed by time hold their supremacy over many a generation, nothing can destroy the intuitive truths of religion: they are above the reach of our will. The holy doctrines of Brahmoism abide for ever—let churches clamour, let sectarians differ ever so widely, let theological dogmatists give to the world thousand and ten thousand shocking and monstrous theories. Glory be unto God! His wisdom and love are boundless and unfathomable!

I.—The problem is almost solved. I am fully prepared to admit the philosophical validity of intuition as a fact of consciousness, its permanence as a historical fact, and its mighty efficacy as a source of practical and living faith. I apprehend, however, your arguments would do very well if human nature remained in an uncorrupted and innocent state. In that case alone would a religion based upon nature be perfectly plausible and satisfactory. But perverted as the human mind is, a system of pure natural theism is simply useless. Survey mankind, and you will find scarcely a small percentage professing and following natural doctrines—so universal is the prevalence of unnatural ones. This therefore I urge, that as man has practically turned astray from a state of nature, Brahmoism is insufficient for knowledge as well as rectitude. My impression is that besides the teachings of nature, a written revelation from God is necessary, nay indispensable ; in other words Brahmoism though philosophically and doctrinally a correct system of faith needs the help of a book revelation to supply its practical deficiencies. Do you not suppose that a Revelation is necessary ?

B.—I am glad you admit the philosophical validity of the basis of Brahmoism. Thus much for the present. We may discuss the subject of Revelation hereafter.

BRETHREN, LOVE YOUR FATHER.

HE FOESAKETH NONE OF US. MAY WE NEVER
FORSAKE HIM.

No. 5.]

[October 1860.

* * * Is there then no help for me ?
Is there no water of consolation in the whole
earth to assuage the agonies of my heart ? Ruth-
less remorse ! how long will thy hideous scorpions
thus harrow and torture me ? When wilt
thou release this wretched sufferer ? Oh ! how
insufferable are the agonies under which I am
smarting ! How miserable and cheerless is my
lot ! Neither day bringeth me rest nor night.
Society hath no charms for me, neither hath
solitude. Joy and peace have for ever forsaken
me. Wherever I turn my eyes, all is gloomy
and frightening. Father mother, brother, wife,
friend, have ye no power now to comfort my
troubled heart ? Is there none to take pity on
this vile wretch ? Has the whole world taken
arms against me ? Oh ! I am harassed, I am
confounded, I am dead. Remorse has made me
desperate and frantic. Where is hell with all
its appalling gloominess, its excruciating tor-
tures, its undying fires, but in the mind of this

depraved sinner. Break, my heart, then, I can bear no more : each moment is aggravating my sufferings and driving me to deeper desperation.—Oh think no more of it.—Think of it I must, for I am groaning under its severities. Oh that accursed recollection—that intolerable thought!—rebellion against the Lord—defiance of my Father's commands—ingratitude to my Supreme Benefactor, my Creator, and Preserver! Foul and abominable iniquities!—Can I help remembering that absolutely helpless state in which I was when in my mother's womb. I knew myself not, how could I then seek my well being : nor could any earthly friend look after me. Yet I grew day by day till I was fit for this world. Was not this owing to my Father's providence? When again I was ushered into this strange world I was profoundly ignorant of what was around me : I was at the mercy of external nature. Yet the wholesome milk of my mother's breast sustained me, and my body and mind went on developing themselves. Who placed this delicious sweet in the mother's breast—the only staff and hope of infancy—but the God of love? Thus protected by His bountiful providence I advanced in age, overcame uncounted ills which flesh is heir to, obtained power and wealth, wisdom and fame, and feasted my senses with those delights and luxuries which He has placed in the vast storehouse of nature.—O Lord, my God, to thee I owe my life and all the pleasures of my life. Thou art the

Life of my life—my Father and Friend for ever. —Never, never did my Father's mercy forsake me—never did He cease to caress and comfort me. Even when intoxicated with carnal enjoyments I turned astray from Him and wantonly revelled amidst the grossest debaucheries, He raised His warning voice, and sought to bring me back to Him. Though with despicable audacity I revolted against His authority and bade defiance to His will, with unabated affection He repeatedly said.—“Dear child, abandon all that is evil and corrupt. Behold ruin is before thee. Beware; beware. Take advantage of thy Father's aid.” Still heedless of His constant remonstrances I persevered in my ungodly career, and sank deeper and deeper in the mire of corruption.—Oh monstrous ingratitude! Oh unpardonable disobedience!—Obdurate heart! is there not a jot of affection—a tittle of natural tenderness in thee? Hast thou rebelled against thy Father? So good, so beneficent, so full of loving-kindness! Hast thou deserted Him?—Woe then to me. My Father, my Friend, the only Light of my life I have lost. Gone is my joy, my strength, and my hope. Gone is all that makes life bearable. What an awful gloom hangs on me. Without my Father how appalling is this world! Amidst its ten thousand horrors I live with none to befriend me. I look above, around, and below me, and I see a heart-rending scene. I look to the east, and to the west, to the north and to the south, and I behold

gigantic perils and difficulties staring me in the face. Methinks in the impenetrable darkness of midnight I am floating on the formidable billows of a vast atlantic,—blasts and hurricanes are howling around me—the dense clouds broadcast over the whole horizon are awfully contrasting themselves with occasional streaks of lightning—thunders are roaring over my head, and the terrific element on which I am floating is every moment hurling me up and down on its mighty surges. “Is there none to help me?” I shriek aloud in bitter despair ; but alas ! my voice is drowned.—Or in some awful wilderness methinks I lie — a weak, helpless infant, with none to pity me, no affectionate mother to fondle and caress me, and press me within her secure arms. I pule and whine, but in vain : with tearful eyes I gaze around me for protection, but alas ! wolves and leopards are contending with each other to snap the thread of my helpless existence. Such art thou, O world, to me—thou land of terrors. Thou hast no benefactor, no sympathising friend. What is society ? A gathering of foreigners, no more : men unrelated to each other, and mindful of their own interests only. What are families, communities, and nations ? What are the boasted relationships and friendships of this world ? Oh ! there is no common relation to bind men, no identity of interests to unite them. I dread society : there is nothing familiar or friendly in it. It is repulsive and appalling.—Where are now the beauties and

pleasures of nature? The sun, and the moon, and the unnumbered small luminaries of the heaven shed but a feeble and pallid light. Zephyr's softest breezes can scarce be distinguished from the chill biting blasts of winter. The raven and the philomel have joined in a hoarse melancholy concert, and are doing dolorous music the wide world round. There is no fragrance in the roses; the lily and the violet have no beauty for me. Is not the world a vast churchyard in which nought but emblems of death are to be seen?—Alas! in what a gloomy and awful scene hast thou left me, O my Father! Hast thou at once forsaken this refractory child—this iniquitous wretch? Absolute Holiness! hast thou completely removed thyself from this corrupt sinner, and left him to be burnt in inextinguishable hell-fire? O merciful God, where hast thou gone to? Thy child is penitent: wilt thou not listen to his lamentations? Already is he weighed down with sorrow; already is his heart crushed with remorse; wilt thou not allow him to approach thee? Oh, how can I live without thee! My Father, my bounteous Father! without thee this life is death to me: this world is a den of suffering and despair. O tell me, Father, where thou art, that I may see thy loving and benignant countenance, and pacify my harassed heart. There is none to console me, Lord, none to bring peace to me. My lot is unbearable. Be not far from me now, my God. O my Father, hasten to my relief and save my bleeding heart.

—Is there no help for me?—"Fate drop the curtain." I can bear no more.

A truce to lamentation! Methinks I hear a voice in the depths of my heart saying—"Wail not. The Father hath not forsaken you. He forsaketh none of His children, not even the most refractory and wayward. He is ever yours—your constant Companion, your everlasting Friend.—Behold His hands already outstretched to lift you from the pool of remorse and despair, and wipe away the tears of your eyes. Behold the light of His face is dispelling the gloom of your heart. Say-not, He is distant from you. Of all things is He ever the nearest to your soul. Open then your eyes, penitent sinner! and see His holy and amiable face. Sorrow shall be no more: suffering shall be at an end." O animating and soothing voice!—My Father has not forsaken me! He is still with me! In the blackened heart of this hardened sinner the All-Holy still abides!—What a celestial light now dawns upon my soul, and brightens and enlivens its whole horizon. How beautifully the whole scene clears up. Every thing has a halo of celestial glory around it. Now each movement of the air stirs up joy and hope: each up-springing lark gives wings to my aspirations: each flowing brook sets my soul a-going: each tuneful bird pours forth the sweets of holy hymns. Trees and mountains are glorifying my Father's majesty: the vernal freshness of the variegated flowers is revealing His beauty.

"Every violet bloom of God, each lily is fragrant with the presence of Deity." Everywhere I turn my eyes I see my Father. I open my eyes, and I see His glory: I close my eyes, and I see Him still. I ask the tree where my Father is, and the mountain where my Father is: the tree and the mountain show Him to me. I ask my soul where my Father is: my soul reveals Him to me.—Is this a treacherous dream I am indulging in? Is not this a pleasant fancy, a charming reverie, too pleasant and charming to be true?—How can that be? Is not my Father before my eyes? Am I not reposing on Him? Is not my whole nature quickened by His sacred presence? Is He not within me 'as the Life of my life? Indeed, nothing can be more perceptible, nothing more tangible. Oh! the world is full of Him. His spirit breathes everywhere, and animates every object.—How cheerful is the aspect of human society! A common family—a blessed brotherhood! •A holy relationship binds all men: we are all children of the same Father. The world is thus our home—our dear home—the abode of domestic joys, and sympathies, and hopes.—O what a beautiful scene is opened around and within me! It is the ineffable glory of my Father's face that has thus brightened and sweetened all things.—Infinite is His mercy: immeasurable His goodness. O how exuberant is His indulgence to sinners! Far from abhorrently spurning away a loathsome wretch like myself, He has with undiminished

love all along kept me in His company. Though blasphemed, reviled, scoffed at, and disobeyed, He has never forsaken me. His fatherly affection has suffered no diminution. His rains and dews, his sun and moon have always continued to serve me: He hath given me food to eat, and water to drink.

Fellow-sinners! contemplate for one moment His boundless mercy: think of His fatherly providence towards you. Though inebriated with the pleasure of the flesh you are rioting in the extravagancies of ungodliness, and sacrificing your spiritual interests for the bubbles of this world; though with steeled hearts you are repelling your Father's claims upon your affection and obedience, and running headlong in an unfilial and ungrateful life, remember that He is still with you,—ready to take you back if you want Him. Daily and hourly does He walk about our streets, exhorting His children to follow Him. To the palace and the hut, the mechanic's workshop and the scholar's closet, the husbandman's field and the capitalist's banking-house, to places of worship as well as the prodigal's table, and the libertine's hall of pleasure He goeth. He goeth to the solitary thinker and the plodding man of business. He visiteth the wealthy and the penurious, the happy and the distressed. Every place He frequenteth: at the doors of every family He standeth, to preach His cause and rouse up His children to purity and faith. But man, ungrateful man, will not give Him a

hearing. He repeats His exhortations hour after hour, moment after moment saying,—“Do give me a place in your hearts, my beloved children”; but with inveterate obstinacy they persevere in their own way: they will not unbar the gates of their hearts. Neither His affectionate words nor His benign looks can soften their adamant hearts. Brethren, imagine for one moment how anxious is our Father for our salvation; how warmly He loves us, how earnestly He seeks our love. He stands with us at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, seeking only an opportunity, to enter our hearts. Offer that opportunity, dear brethren, and welcome your Father. He is our all, Creator, Father, Guide, and Saviour—our hope and our joy—Life of our life, our Supreme Friend and our Best Companion for ever. Do not any longer treat Him with disrespect or neglect: keep not your affectionate Father waiting at the door any longer. Do not lose one golden moment of life, I beseech you. How slippery is our position in this world!—none knows when death shall close our career. Come then forthwith, dear brethren, and embrace your Father with all your heart and soul. The hungry shall be fed, the weak shall be made strong, the ignorant knowing, the poor rich with treasure priceless; every one shall be cooled under the shade of His mercy. Dear brethren, approach your loving Father and consecrate your heart and soul to Him.—There is none like unto Him: there is none like unto Him, brethren.

Affectionate Father! Infinite is thy mercy. The length and breadth of thy loving-kindness who can measure?—Immersed in the filth of worldliness I lay—an unfortunate and helpless wretch. There was none to protect me or mitigate my sufferings. Rest and peace I lost; no enjoyment was there for me; remorse ate into the depths of my heart, till I was mad with despair. But thy blessing hand thou didst outstretch, and deliver me from my death-like state.—I saw thy face, thy amiable face, and my sufferings like clouds passed away from my mind. By thy boundless grace, Merciful Lord, new life has come upon me, my soul has been clad in new energies and sentiments. O thou comforter of the distressed, thou hope of the dejected, O thou saviour of sinners, at thy holy feet I fall prostrate, and consecrate my whole soul unto thee. May thy face be for ever before my mind's eye.—May I never forsake thee, dear Lord; and may all my thoughts, and feelings, and actions in blessed harmony flow unto thee. Grant me strength that I may live for ever, thy obedient servant, and thy dutiful child.

Sing the glories of the GOD OF MY SALVATION, ye nations of the world: Heaven and Earth, chant His dear name for ever and ever. Let the east and the west, the north and the south be filled with sweet hosannas unto my Father. May the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, the powerful and the weak, the young and the old joyfully praise the Supreme God—

Him whose kind providence for evermore watcheth over the interests of all. May He be dear to every individual, every family, and every community. Lord, when shall all thy children worship and love thee?

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

No. 6.]

[November 1860.

THE following extracts constitute some of the evidences which clearly prove that, thanks to the progress of intelligence and free inquiry, the emancipation of the mind from the yoke of books and churches has been effected in many quarters of Christendom. The independent spirit of the age will not brook the prostration of the soul beneath any other authority except that of God: nor will it, in its onward march, halt at the peremptory bidding of orthodoxy,—"Thus far only shalt thou go." Freedom and Progress are the watchwords of the 19th century. It is likewise beginning to be felt that true faith does not consist in an intellectual assent to historical events, but in earnest and steady reliance upon the ever-living, ever-present Deity; and that salvation far from depending upon any literary capacity of wading through a thousand folios of academic divinity, comparing passages,

expounding texts, weighing evidences, and solving complicated problems of metaphysics, history, geography, ethnology, criticism, &c., is nothing more than the regeneration of the soul by thorough resignation to the justice and mercy of the God of Salvation. Many an earnest soul is strenuously protesting against the worship of the "dead letter"—antiquated symbols, and lifeless dogmas, and vindicating the living revelations of the spirit within—those supreme pandects of Intuitive Religion which are engraven on the tablets of the soul. A strong yearning after the Living and Spiritual is thus clearly manifest. Nor, again, does the controversial and jealous spirit of sectarian dogmatism fall in with the catholic views of the age. History has portrayed in frightful colours the mischievous effects of sectarianism, and has fully proved that *opinion* cannot serve as the bond of religious confraternity—that what is local, contingent, and specific, cannot constitute the basis of a church. Such a church as stands upon what is above time and place—upon the catholic principles of Faith and Love, such a church as shall establish the Brotherhood of Man, many are looking forward to with eager expectations. In few, the signs of the times display a manifest tendency to what is Progressive, Living, Spiritual, and Catholic and fully sanction the hope that the "Church of the Future" will be Theism—the Supreme Heaven-born Brahmoism ! It is a pleasure to behold such prognostications.

Stout-hearted seekers and lovers of truth ! with unflinching faith and enthusiasm endeavour to promote the spiritual emancipation of humanity, and pave the way for the advent of the True Church.

“Already is it seen that the true advancement of theology does not depend so much upon any logical or purely inductive processes applied to the Scriptural data as upon the clearing of our religious intuitions, and the higher development of our whole religious consciousness. Thus as a higher and more spiritual philosophy advances, the arena of theological researches will be removed more and more from the region of these mere mechanical and inductive principles, and the main efforts of theologians be directed to the development of those lofty spiritual intuitions, in which Christianity, as a religion, essentially consists, and by the light of which alone we can interpret the language either of nature or revelation.

We affirm it therefore as an expectation which, if there be any truth in the significancy of the past, must *inevitably* be realized: that the scattered and disjointed elements of Protestantism, those pulverized fragments of our religious life which have been isolated by the asserted supremacy of the individual judgment and the all-sufficiency of logical processes must ere long seek for a new and a higher unity in the intuitional consciousness.”—*“Philosophy of Religion”* by J. D. Morell.

•“The reason why many have been so anxious to represent the letter of the Bible as inspired is that there may be a *fixed standard* for truth in the world. They do not consider that the letter can never serve as a standard for the *Spirit* of Christianity—that the two are altogether incommensurable—that the letter *alone*, in fact, never has secured unity in the Church—but that the unity we so much yearn after comes only through the development of the religious *life*. This being the case, where is the value or reasonableness of laying so great a stress upon the letter when after all we *must* be brought, on any hypothesis, to one and the same conclusion, namely, that the spirit of Truth interpreted by Divine aid and perceived through the awakened religious consciousness of true believers is the real and essential revelation—the sole basis of Christian unity—the appeal to which we all in the end practically repair? Whether the words be dictated or not, there is therefore exactly the same necessity for another and spiritual appeal, which is in fact nothing but affirming in the spirit of our whole previous analysis that as all revelation must be made to the intuitional faculty, mere material and logical appliances, whether in the form of writing or speaking, can only avail as *means* towards the realization of the great end implied in the idea of a *revelation from God*.”—*Ibid.*

“Would that the whole idea of inspiration were thus brought as a moral power to bear

upon the progress of the Christian Church; would that the unity of the Church were placed, not in the deadness of the letter, but in the higher realization of the spirit of the truth. Then at length should we see the dawn of a brighter day when the essence would be placed before the symbol—the living before the dead—and when the Gospel would come to us, not in *word* only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.”—*Ibid.*

“Why should we be perpetually craving after a stiff, literal, verbal infallibility? Christianity consists not in propositions—it is a life in the soul; its laws and precepts are not engraven on stone, they can only be engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart.”—*Ibid.*

“Why are we still seeking the law of God in the “letter” of Jewish books, when the “Spirit” of these very books refers us to our own Heart as the tablet of the Almighty? Why do we go on with endless and fruitless quotation of obsolete “texts” to justify our postponement of Justice, Mercy and Faith to trivial questions of circumstantial belief and ceremonial practice? If it were not matter of actual experience it would sound incredible that men, women and children of all classes should in this Age and Country, be summoned to read, mark, and learn, with prostration of soul, the oriental imaginings of Arab Historians and Poets, who lived and died some thousands of years since. It seems an infatuation almost surpassing example, that Civilized

Christians of the nineteenth century should be called upon to listen with awe to the wild traditions of a remote Syrian tribe, celebrating the triumphs of their furious, jealous and fickle "God of Hosts" and God of Battles." Yet week after week, year after year, we go on ignoring the religious light of our own land and our own times in favour of the patriarchal haziness that obscured the land of Canaan in the days of Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Sampson, David and Ezra. Our "Sabbaths," our "solemn meetings," our "appointed feasts," are still set apart to instruction, setting forth how the Sun and Moon stood still to countenance the slaughter of men by men; how the noon-tide shadow went back ten degrees to comfort a King; how the Ass opened her mouth in articulate talk with the Prophet; how city walls fell prostrate at the trumpet's blast, and how an iron axe floated at the good man's call."—*Catholicity, Spiritual and Intellectual*, by T. Wilson.

"Man is indeed a "Holy Bible" of his God, close-written with "the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth him understanding." Not a human work of pen and ink embodied in paper and paste, but a divine *afflatus* of mind and soul incarnate in the noblest form of flesh and blood. Every generation of Man is, or ought to be, a new and improved edition of the Holiest Bible extant in this terrestrial Planet; the fault is our own if we reprint servile copies of the same type."—*Ibid.*

"As Protestants we must cherish the Bible, but not worship it; the Soul must do with it as with the net to which the Kingdom of Heaven is likened in the Gospel,—must choose the good, cast away the bad, and neglect the indifferent; for like the net, the Bible has gathered of every kind."—*Ibid.*

"The "Church of the future" will be the reflection of the spiritual condition of the world of *to-day*, and not the lifeless image of a by-gone age. Christians will not, much longer, dispute whether they shall adopt the language of the Nicene age, or of the Protestant Reformation—of the Tractarian or Tridentine theology, in their confessions or liturgies. The mind of the 19th century has a growing tendency to a reliance rather upon "*insight*" than upon "*tradition*," and the memories of the past, and will have its own appropriate expression in religious faith, as well as in philosophy and science. It is as little disposed to borrow its theology from Athanasius or from Cranmer, as it is to adopt the philosophy of Aristotle, or the science of Archimedes, in exclusion of the higher insight of Bacon or of Locke—of Newton—of Humboldt—of Leverrier, or of Berzelius. The revelations of God to man will not be looked for, alone, in the plains of Palestine—in the valley of the Jordan, or in the land of Goshen; nor will they, any longer, be considered as exclusively confined to the writings of Jewish prophets, or Christian evangelists. It has been said, that to seek our

divinity in books is "to seek the living amongst the dead," and to confine the spiritual bounty of God to primitive and barbarous ages, is virtually to deny those attributes of perpetual and omnipresent justice and mercy with which every rational creed has hitherto invested Him."—*Popular Christianity by F. J. Foxton.*

"From the present condition of the Church, which I have attempted to describe, we may, I think, fairly infer that a vital and organic change in her system, and not merely a superficial adaptation of her teaching to the spirit of the age, is imminent and certain, and that a reformation, far more extensive than has hitherto embellished her history, inevitably awaits her. Her "whole head is sick," her "whole heart is faint." Even in the multitude of her counsellors there is no "strength," but rather confusion, vacillation and dismay."—*Ibid.*

"The apparent excitement in our Churches, so triumphantly appealed to as evidence of the revival of the popular creed, is the first rising of the tempest that is destined to overwhelm it. The zeal of the age is for knowledge and for truth; and, though it may for a moment pass into the dead forms of the old superstition, it will soon outgrow its narrow tenement. The world is about to complete the triumph of toleration by declaring that man shall no longer legislate for man in the concerns of his soul."—*Ibid.*

"The faith, then, that "justifies" is not faith in human events long passed away, but in Divine

instincts still throbbing in the human breast—faith, in that fair idea of perfection that the Spirit of God reveals to us in our highest and purest moments.”—*Ibid.*

“The faith that depends on historical knowledge belongs, exclusively, to those whose business or pleasure may lead them to this literary banquet—a coarser and homelier, and, perhaps, a healthier diet must be found for those who have neither the taste, leisure nor the learning, to leaven their spiritual concerns with the luxuries of an elegant literature.”—*Ibid.*

“If Christ were a man, he is our *pattern*; ‘the possibility of our race made real.’ If he were God—a partaker of God’s nature, as the orthodox maintain—then they are guilty of a cruel mockery in speaking of him as a type, a model of human excellence. How can one endowed with the perfections of God be an example to beings encumbered with the weaknesses of humanity? Adieu, then, to Jesus as anything but a Propounder of doctrines, an Utterer of precepts!”—*Creed of Christendom by R. W. Greg.*

“Miracles, we say, are not, and never can be, a sure foundation for revealed religion—an historic creed. A true Revelation addressed [to all mankind, and destined for all ages, must be attested by evidence adequate and accessible to all men and to all ages. It must carry with it its own permanent and unfading credentials.”—*Ibid.*

“Strange conformation of mind! which can

find. no adequate foundation for its hopes, its worship, its principles of action, in the far stretching universe, in the glorious firmament, in the deep, full soul, bursting with unutterable thoughts—yet can rest all, with a trusting simplicity approaching the sublime, on what a book relates of the sayings and doings of a man who lived eighteen centuries ago!"—*Ibid.*

"There is, be the cause what it may, a total alienation between the British Churches and the British people. The same may be said of the other European countries already noticed. In France, in Germany, in Italy, and in England, the cry is, the Church is not the Church of the people."—*Religious Scepticism by J. Langford.*

"The constant assertion that if we reject a part, we must reject the whole; that every fact is alike the direct revelation of God; the bowing down to the letter which killeth, with an utter forgetfulness of the spirit, which alone giveth life; the repeated charge that we have only to believe and not to question; the daily making of truth itself a heresy; in a word, Bibliolatry in all its phases has done, and is still doing, vital injury to the cause of a daily, earnest, and vital religious life manifesting itself amongst us."—*Ibid.*

"Each party claiming to draw its belief, its forms, and its doctrines from the Bible; each drawing texts therefrom to establish its own peculiar tenets; has converted the life-inspiring Book into a divinity too sacred to be touched; or

a dusty assemblage of texts for supporting its views and establishing its own creed. The practical results of such proceedings have been most disastrous. Nothing is now more common than the exclamation, 'You can prove any thing from the Bible!'—*Ibid.*

"The mistake which sectarianism has committed of making opinion the standard of piety has been most fatal. Every nonconformist has set up an orthodoxy the departure from which is deemed damnation; and while the dissentients are quarreling over the disputed point, thousands go down to death, uninfluenced by the genial and soul-preserving spirit of religion."—*Ibid.*

"We know of no sight so sad, as the condition of the religious world in England at the present time."—*Ibid.*

"However various the revelations we may receive from without, and whether we recognize among those revelations certain sacred books, we should yet feel that the highest and most beautiful revelation is that which is within; that the Individual is to himself the great revelation by which all other revelations must be tested."—*Elements of Individualism by W. Maccall.*

"I believe that the Past should be regarded as the Preparation of the Present and the guide of the Future; but not, in any respect, as a perfect model either for the Present or the Future."—*Ibid.*

"It is a mistake, however, for the unsectarian mind to suppose that from taking an unsectarian

position, isolation would be an inevitable result. In quitting special connection with a particular sect or a particular party, in order to assume its Individuality again, it would find that it had only brought itself into fraternal contact with all sects and all parties with whom it would most willingly fraternize. It would find that it had only widened association instead of cutting itself off from all association. It would also discover a still more comprehensive, a still nobler association than this, if once it seized the courage to burst away from sectarian bondage,—community with the brotherhood of Truth throughout the world, with the poets, with the philosophers, with the philanthropists, who in all lands are working for no other object than the happiness and enlightenment of man, and who obey no other inspiration than that of making the Universe, material and spiritual, a more glad and glorious revelation to the human intelligence.”—*Ibid.*

“Be it ours, my friends, to do what so few have the light and the courage to do, to be alike unsectarian in our religious and political attitude and utterances ; to labor with the good of all sects and of all parties for common objects of social emancipation ; and doubt not that thousands and thousands, even in bigoted England, will be induced to follow an example so sublime, and to work in the same noble spirit that we work for the elevation and regeneration of our race.”—*Ibid.*

“If the views which have been advanced are sound it is plain that there is a Religion of

Humanity,—a religion which belongs to human nature ; which is not the religion of the western world or of the eastern world, or exclusively perhaps of this world at all ; but it may be of all worlds,—a religion which does not descend to have an earthly metropolis, whether it be Rome Jerusalem or Mecca,—a religion which is not bound up within the covers of a book, be it the Vedas, the Koran, or the Bible,—a religion which is not the property of the white race or of the black race ; not the religion of Europe or of Hindustan, of Greece or of Persia, of Palestine or of Egypt,—a religion which existed before Moses reformed that of Egypt, and has existed since Luther reformed that of Europe,—a religion which is not subordinated to the influences of climate ; which does not rise or disappear with the attainment by mankind of a different stage,—a more advanced stage of civilization ; which is the same permanently ; continues as human nature continues ; which is to be found wherever man is found ; common as sense and reason, thought and feeling, mind and heart ; and which as it refers itself back to the earliest ages of history, so will not grow dim with age, nor fade in years through the coming generations.”—*Religious Ideas by Fox.*

“I shall not now pause to expose the vulgar fallacy of confounding faith with that intellectual process, that “conjunction of ideas” which constitutes belief in an historical fact.

Happily so strong a reaction is taking place even

in the bosom of the Protestant Churches against this absurd error, that it may be hoped it will ere long be exploded. The kernel of truth of which it appears to be the utterly worthless shell is doubtless this:—that the acceptance with heart and head of the doctrine of the “GOODNESS OF GOD” (set forth in the teaching and life of Christ, *or in any other way*) is the SALVATION of the soul.”—*Intuitive Morals, Part II.*

“The more we *know* the less we shall *believe* in a traditional miraculous revelation. The *better* we are, the less we shall *need* to believe in one.”—*Ibid.*

“Man is greater than the Bible. That is one ray out of the sun—one drop from the infinite ocean. The inward Christ, which alone abideth forever, has much to say which the Bible never told, though it may imply the whole. The Bible is made for man, not man for the Bible. Its truths are as old as the creation, repeated more or less purely in every tongue. Let its errors and absurdities no longer be forced on the pious mind, but perish forever; let the word of God come through Conscience, Reason, and holy Feeling, as light through the windows of morning. Worship with no master but God, no creed but Truth, no service but Love, and we have nothing to fear.”—*Discourse of Religion by T. Parker.*

“To set up other men’s inspiration as our law, is to disown that teaching of God, to which

alone they owed their eminence. Christians were certain to degenerate, the moment they began to worship apostles, books and church-rules and precedent and tradition, and thus to sip at other men's buckets, instead of drawing living water from the true fountain, God himself."—*The Soul* by F. W. Newman.

"For to the life of God neither belief in miracles availeth anything, nor unbelief ; but a new Creation ; and Faith that worketh by Love : and as many as walk after THIS RULE, peace shall be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."—*Ibid.*

"If no single life time, devoted only to this, could overtake all, or nearly all, that is included in the external evidences of revelation, and if unless *all* be overtaken, there can be no legitimate rest to the understanding, in this species of proof, is it conceivable, is it possible, that the Most High should send a message to his creatures which could be satisfactorily authenticated in no other way than this? It is impossible. It is contrary to all reason, to all probability. One might venture to affirm, without exaggeration, that if rational faith be of the nature supposed, there is not a rational believer in revelation, in existence at this moment. There never has been a rational believer in revelation, not one individual, in any age, who has so thoroughly, so exhaustively gone over the whole of the external proofs, as to be able to say with truth, "There is not a corner, which

I have not explored, not a spot, in which some seemingly decisive fact against the authority of Scripture might be, which I have not narrowly scanned." The thing is literally, physically impossible * * Talk of Hebrew, Greek, Chaldaic, Syriac, and other languages of ancient codices, ancient versions, of historical, scientific, philological, critical, hermeneutical researches and studies, of prophecies and miracles and inspiration, and the kinds of investigation belonging to them ! What do, what can the myriads of good Christian people know about any of these things ? Nothing, absolutely nothing."—*Province of Reason by J. Young.*

"Read within!" is the audible command of his own mind, to every human being—"Read *within!*" Go down to the deep place of intuitions, which own no earthly fountain ! Search, Look, Gaze, Try to detect and decipher the mysterious* writing on the primitive tablets of the soul, which no created hand has traced ! Listen, also ! in that profoundest, sacredest adytum—away, from all outer sounds, which derange and dull the organ of hearing, wait for the faintest whisperings of the holy oracle ! Look and Listen, Wait and Gaze, long, patiently, painfully ! The oracle *will* utter itself, the hidden holy writing *will* shine out, and some divine letters, words, sentences *will* become legible to the eye !"—*Ibid*

AN EXHORTATION.

o 7.

December 1860.

It is indeed painful to see man, that "beauty of the world, that paragon of animals," dissipate his life in extravagant follies and sensualities, regardless as of the pre-eminent position which he occupies in creation, as of the sacred mission which he has to fulfil here below. Does it not awaken pity and regret to see him smother those godlike attributes of reason, judgment, and conscience wherewith he has been so nobly endowed, and under the cravings of tyrant appetites, pursue a course of reckless indulgences, like wolves and leopards of the wilderness? Alas! man, what an enormous swerving from thy destiny—what a profound ignorance of what thou art and why thou livest! Is it thy glory, with arrogated independence, to disavow thy allegiance to thy Maker, and bid defiance to His commandments? Hast thou deserted all that is noble and sacred to idolize the evanescent pleasures of the flesh and prostrate thyself in the service of earth-born impurities? Luxuriating in debaucheries, art thou oblivious of thy moral and spiritual interests, and blind to the immense world which stretches forth in awful majesty;

beyond the skirts of death? Has the impious conviction found a lodgment in thy mind that a smooth course of carnal gratification is the be-all and end-all of human existence, and that no solemn reckoning awaits him who wages rebellious war against the King of kings? Where is thy boasted judgment when thou dost prefer the poisoned chalice of wickedness to the nectarful bowl of virtue—the momentary freaks of earthly joy to the immortal glory of the life to come—the ignoble servitude of lowly passions to the high-aspiring obeisance to the throne of heaven:—where thy reason, where the ostensible distinction between thee and the brutes? Has impiety so hardened thy soul as to render it proof against the earnest exhortations with which all objects hourly call thee to rectitude and God? Dost thou not know that the magnificent things which thou so industriously and manfully pursuest, and the pleasures which thou dost incessantly court with all the fervour of love shall “fall like Lucifer never to hope again”—that the gaities of sin lift thee to ecstatic raptures but to hurl thee down to the deep recesses of remorse and self-condemnation—and that a day shall come when all that thou callest thy own shall leave thee and betray thee to the hands of relentless death? How fickle is fortune; how breath-like pomp, glory, and all pleasures of the nether world! Alas! how soon are the sunny days of life engloomed by the dark clouds of penury; how soon are the halls

of festivity and mirth converted into scenes of woe, and loud bursts of laughter into cries of lamentation and despair: how often are the warmest longings of the heart frustrated, the most cherished hopes blighted, the pleasantest possessions wrung away, and the liveliest joys embittered! Alas! How often do the icy hands of death rend asunder the sweetest ties of domestic love and the dearest connections of friendship. Boast not, man, of the felicities and honors of the world: they are as the dream that soon passeth away, the flower that blossoms to-day but fades on the morrow,—this moment they glitter, in the next, lo! they disappear, and leave nought but heaviness, vexation, and despair. List, list, each atom in Nature's vast works cries, "all is vanity."

Art thou too engulfed in odious ingratitude? He who feeds thee, and makes His air and waters minister to thy comforts—whose sun and moon shine on thee—whose flowers breathe ambrosial odours into thy nostrils—and whose fruits fetch delicious flavour to thee, shall He not meet with a grateful response from thy soul? Art thou to remain oblivious of Him who with more than a father's love provides thee with food and garment, and the manifold joys which thou dost enjoy, whose everlasting arms always uphold and protect thee, and whose loving-kindness unto thee continues unabated even when thou dost despise and forsake Him? Ingratitude to Him who is at once the Creator,

and Preserver, the Supreme Benefactor and the Everlasting Friend, the Fountain-head of those blessings which meet us in exuberance wherever we turn, what can palliate, what can excuse? When each object testifies His supreme goodness, and all nature sings million-voiced the glories of His providence, can irreligion abide by any plea or excuse, or harbour itself amid the important (?) concerns and cares of this world to escape the brand of a most abominable ingratitude?

Nay, art thou not aware that an awful government hangs over thee enjoining most solemn and high injunctions for thine observance, and holding forth appropriate recompense for vice and virtue. Instinct with a power which never fails to approve of what is right, and disapprove of what is wrong, and which with dictatorial authority commands the performance of the former, and prohibits the commission of the latter, art thou not every moment warned as to what thou oughtest to do? Is there not always within thee a conscience which firmly upholds the law of God, and ever cries, Beware? But if regardless of its constant remonstrances thou dost uninterruptedly riot in licentiousness, think not that thou hast escaped the awful penalties of thine iniquity. No. Nothing can change the course of divine justice : firm and unalterable are its decrees. Rest sure, that though for a season the gale of prosperity might blow on the face of wickedness, and luxuries and enjoyments

ward off inquietudes from a guilty soul, yet a day shall come when the ambushed thunders of Heaven's justice shall light on thee. Canst thou not imagine that solemn and awful hour when on death-bed thou shalt cast a retrospective glance at thy past life, and Memory shall wake up from the burial-places of the mind a formidable host of wicked intents and sacrilegious deeds whose very sight shall overpower thy reflection, and aggravate, in a ten-fold degree, the horrors of thy fatal day : nay, when Anticipation, as free, shall present unto thee the prefiguration of a scene full of terrible punishments and excruciating inflictions ? Imagine that awful hour when the past and the future shall thus conspire to lash and harrow thy soul, and say, do the promptings of self-love dispose thee to be a voluntary victim of so painful and miserable a lot.

What motive then, O man, can urge thee to forsake thy God ? What is it that doth so prostrate and infatuate thy soul as to render thee oblivious of thy best interests ? What unaccountable consideration induces thee to forego the pursuit of that wealth, that bliss, that honor which perisheth not, and surrender thyself to the hands of those phantoms of delight, those charming temptations of the flesh which bewitch only to beguile, and lure only to destroy ? What is there in sublunary things that can so stupify thy mind as to make thee energetic and resolute in bringing about thine own destruction ? When so many exhortations are ever and anon calling

thee to thy duties, when so many lights are showing thee the true path, when conscience and reason, and even self-love and thine own daily experiences are pointing out thy great destiny, why dost thou, O man, thus paralyze thy best energies, debase thy best feelings, and yield thy heart and soul, mind and body to the service of the world ?

Alas ! man, thy life decries thy dignity, and shows thyself unworthy of thy illustrious Parentage, if unmindful of the dictates of judgment and reason, indifferent to the hourly solicitations of nature, ungrateful to the Bounteous Creator and regardless of the terrors of moral retribution thou hast chosen to forsake the path of rectitude—a scene where the star of grace shines in serene rays, and contentment's cherub, aye, wafts sweet breeze to the devout heart—to grovel on the filthy platform of iniquities. And thus dost thou stand now—thy glories shorn off, thy helmet of dignity robbed, and thy adorable figure reduced to a puny, unsightly thing, scarcely to be distinguished from the unsentient objects of earth—a wretched despicable voluptuary, domineered over by mere extraneous circumstances, and carried adrift along the tide of passions, without self-possession, without self-control. Oh ! how long shalt thou thus slumber in inglorious repose and wallow senseless in the mire of ungodliness ? Verily, thy life was not made for so base a purpose : thine immortal soul was not destined to fall into so low a degeneracy.

Awake, then, O man, from thy lethargy, and stir thyself to the great work of thy sanctification. Endeavour, at the outset, to cleanse and purify thyself by the waters of penitence and remorse, and prayerfully look up to Him who helpeth the weak and giveth light unto the blind. Away from the disastrous billows of worldliness, seek the peaceful harbour of God and truth. Beware, the world is full of temptations. With wariness and deliberation, therefore, conduct thyself in the various walks of life, and see that in thy thoughts and words and actions thou art neither deluded by vanities nor enticed by temptations. Confine thy gaze no longer within the pales of the present moment, but with angel's ken view the distant regions of eternity. Let heaven-born anticipations regulate all thine actions and thoughts. Be it thy perpetual ambition to fulfil the ordinances of God with unfaltering assiduity and enthusiasm, and to attain to that eternal bliss which He has fixed as the reward of virtue. Be it thy highest glory to subjugate the fierce passions of the soul, and to secure a triumphant entry into the domain of godliness and rectitude. So shall divine light irradiate the soul of mortal man ; and so the world itself, now the hot-bed of sin and misery, shall become the garden of virtue and felicity : and all shall be peace and hilarity, bliss and harmony. Behold the scene clarifies, the landscape of human society brightens with gayer and livelier hues—the strife of passions is o'er—avarice and ambition,

lust and intemperance sneak into their merited shade—harmony, with wide-extended wings, broods over the earth—contentment sits in every breast, and virtue reigns supreme,—and man rises in the love and favor of his Father. So “paradise is opened in the wild.”

In the momentous work, of thy spiritual reformation, make no ignominious delay. The demon of death follows thy heels, and shall smite thee perchance in the blossom of wickedness. Up up, then, degraded soul, from the filthy den of worldliness where thou hast chosen an accursed lodgment, and turn to thy Maker, thy Preserver, and thy friend.

Away! Seducing vice. Away! Fatal ungodliness. Hail! Virtue, Peace, and Salvation.

TESTIMONIES TO THE VALIDITY OF INTUITIONS.

PART I.

No 8.

February 1861.

Even in this age when philosophy after numerous “schismatic aberrations” is establishing itself upon the indestructible beliefs of spontaneous consciousness, and the necessity of

appeals to "the catholic principles of all philosophy" is being deeply felt, there seem to be in some quarters strong prejudices against the Doctrine of Intuitions. Some look upon it as an innovation in the history of philosophy—as the peculiar theory of a new school rather than a valid system supported by the consentient testimony of great thinkers. Others thoroughly ignore the intuitive or *a priori* element in human knowledge and regard it as a capricious sentimentality or at best a derivative cognition. That these prejudices are generally the result of superficial views and indicate a tacit acquiescence in the convenient system of empiricism can hardly be disputed. So powerfully has this system influenced not only psychology proper but politics, ethics, and theology, that it is no wonder that even now, though it has been exploded and superseded by better systems of philosophy, some, would still advocate its obnoxious principles and represent all our cognitions of sensible as well as supersensible truths as the educt of experience.

However, those who have deeply studied the history of philosophy must have learnt a different lesson. Indeed, nothing is more certain than that such a principle in the mind as Intuition was discovered and admitted in the earliest ages of speculation and has since received the sanction of almost all philosophers of celebrity; although its systematic exposition belongs to later times. It was not till the time of Reid—if we except Buffier whose writings have little

philosophic weight—that a scientific attempt was made to expound the doctrine of Intuitions “or Common Sense.” Subsequently Sir Wm. Hamilton employed his remarkable force of understanding and his unsurpassed profundity of philosophical knowledge to elucidate that doctrine more fully, and gave his elaborate treatise to the world in his edition of Reid. It must be observed, however, that there have been endless differences of opinion in regard to the special name and character of intuition. Thus Dugald Stewart adhered more to the elemental character of intuitive truths, and called them “Stamina of human reason ;” the German school and Coleridge to their immediacy ; Reid and Hamilton to their catholicity and originality ; Brown to their necessity ; Cousin to their spontaneity &c. This circumstance, however, does not in the least affect their testimony to the truth of intuition. It rather shows that so vitally important is the doctrine of original and intuitive truths to the interests of true philosophy that in some shape or other it must be upheld by all great thinkers. It is very striking that even such philosophers as Locke and Hume, whose theories are essentially opposed to it, have been betrayed into the admission of its validity. It is worthy of remark too that not only has the importance of the doctrine of intuition been recognised by modern philosophers, but it has been even acknowledged by some of them in unequivocal terms that true philosophy rests on the pedestal

of intuition—its object being simply the legitimate exposition and application of the native cognitions of the mind ; that erroneous systems of philosophy are attributable solely to departure from the doctrine of intuition ; and that philosophy in order to be valid and true has simply to return to intuitive consciousness. In short, the history of philosophy bears irrefragable testimony to the truth that the doctrine of intuition is an abiding fact amidst the ever-shifting opinions and the endless controversies of Sensationalism, Idealism, Mysticism, and Scepticism. If philosophy is the development of the normal truths of consciousness, and if the history of philosophy is the true record of the theories which have resulted from the investigation of the mind in different epochs and centuries, then certainly is this doctrine not only valid but universal and eternal, and arguments drawn from it, whether applied to our conceptions of material objects, or of the transcendental truths of morality and religion, are eminently scientific, and challenge the assent of all mankind.

In illustration of the above remarks innumerable testimonies might be adduced. Some of them are here subjoined.

“Those things, however, are true and primary which obtain belief not through other things, but through themselves. For it is not requisite in scientific principles, to investigate the why, but each of the principles ought to be credible, itself through itself.”—*Aristotle*.

"What appears to all that we affirm to be ; and he who rejects this belief will assuredly advance nothing better deserving of credence."
—*Ibid.*

"For it is a mark of ignorance not to be able to distinguish those things which ought to be demonstrated from things of which no demonstration should be attempted. In truth it is altogether impossible that everything should be susceptible of demonstration ; otherwise the process should extend to infinity and after all our labour nothing would be gained."—*Ibid.*

"Hence if we know and believe through certain first principles we must know and believe these themselves in a superlative degree, for the very reason that we know and believe secondary truths through them."—*Ibid.*

"These common notions, though excited in us by the objects of sense are not conveyed to us by them ; they are implanted in us by nature, so that God seems to have imparted to us not only a part, of his image, but of his wisdom. And whatever is understood and perceived by all men alike deserves to be accounted one of these notions, some of them are instinctive, others are deduced from such as are. The former are distinguishable by six marks ; priority, independence, universality, certainty, so that no man can doubt them without putting off as it were his nature, necessity, that is, usefulness for the preservation of man, lastly, intuitive apprehension, for these common notions do not

require to be inferred."—*Account of Lord Herbert of Cherbury ; Hallam's Lit. Of Europe.*

"In the conclusion of this treatise, Herbert lays down the five common notions of natural religion implanted, as he conceives, in the breasts of all mankind. 1. That there is a God ; 2. That he ought to be worshipped. 3. That virtue and piety are the chief parts of worship ; 4. That we are to repent and turn from our sins ; 5. That there are rewards and punishments in another life."—*Ibid.*

"Sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves without the intervention of any other ; and this I think we may call intuitive knowledge. From this the mind is at no pains of proving or examining but perceives the truth as the eye doth light, only by being directed towards it."—*Locke's Essays.*

"This kind of knowledge is the clearest and most certain that human frailty is capable of. This part of knowledge is irresistible, and like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived as soon as the mind turns its view that way and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt, or examination, but the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it. He that demands a greater certainty than this demands he knows not what and shows only that he has a mind to be a sceptic without being able to be so."—*Ibid.*

"From the one consideration, then, that the

understanding itself is innate, though our ideas are not, he [Leibnitz] goes on to reason, that there are, both in mathematics and philosophy, necessary truths, whose certainty does not spring from experience, but which have their foundation originally in the thinking soul. These truths he regarded as the primary sources or elements of human knowledge ; so that his starting-point in philosophy was not, as with Locke, the simple unresolvable product of the sensational faculty, but the simple unresolvable product of the understanding."—*Account of Leibnitz, Morell's History of Philosophy.*

" Leibnitz admitted innate truths, which he explains to be cognitions not actually, but only virtually, existent in the mind, anterior to experience ; by which they are occasioned, excited, registered, exemplified, manifested but not properly caused or contributed, or their infallibility and eternal certainty demonstrated, for, as necessary to be thought, and therefore absolutely universal, they cannot be the product of sense, experience, induction ; these at best being only competent to establish the relatively general. These truths are consequently given as natural habitudes, that is, dispositions, aptitudes, preformations active and passive, which render the intellect more than a mere *tabula rasa*. Truths thus innate are manifested in two forms ; either as *Instincts*, or as the *Light of Nature*. But both become known to us as facts of consciousness, that is, in immediate, internal experience.

and if this experience deceive us, we can have no assurance of any truth, be it one of *fact*, or be it one of *reason*. Leibnitz's *Natural Light* and *Instinct* are together, equivalent to *Common Sense*."—*Testimony of Leibnitz, Sir Wm. Hamilton's Edition of Reid's Works, Note A.*

"That some moral and philosophical truths there are so evident in themselves that it would be easier to imagine half mankind run mad, and joined precisely in the same species of folly, than to admit anything as truth which should be advanced against such natural knowledge, fundamental reason, and common sense."—*Shaftesbury.*

"The first of those qualities [essential to first truths] is to be so clear that if we attempt to defend or attack them, it cannot be done but by propositions which manifestly are neither more clear nor more certain."—*Buffier's First Truths.*

"They are so strongly imprinted in our minds that we regulate our conduct by them notwithstanding all the speculative refinements of those who imagine contrary opinions and who even act themselves conformably, not to their own imaginary notions but to those very first truths that are universally received."—*Ibid.*

"Those who have refused the reality of moral distinctions may be ranked among the disingenuous disputants. The only way of converting an antagonist of this kind is to leave him to himself for finding that nobody keeps

up the controversy with him, it is probable he will at last of himself from mere weariness come over to the side of *common sense* and reason."—*Hume's Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*.

"We ascribe to reason two offices or two degrees. The first is to judge of things self-evident. The second is to draw conclusions that are not self-evident from those that are. The first of these is the province and the sole province of Common Sense; and therefore it coincides with reason in its whole extent and is only another name for one branch, or one degree of reason"—*Reid's Works*.

"One of the most important distinctions of our judgments is that some of them are intuitive, others grounded on argument."—"I hold it to be certain and even demonstrable that all knowledge got by reasoning must be built upon first principles. This is as certain, as that every house must have a foundation."—"Such original and natural judgments are therefore a part of that furniture which nature hath given to the human understanding. They are the inspiration of the Almighty no less than our notions or simple apprehensions."—"Indeed the authority of this tribunal is too sacred and venerable, and has prescription too long in its favour, to be now *wisely* called in question."—*Ibid*.

"The term common sense hath in modern times been used by philosophers, both French and British to signify that power of the mind

which perceives truth or commands belief not by progressive argumentation but by an instantaneous instinctive and irresistible impulse derived neither from education nor from habit but from nature ; acting independently of our will whenever its object is present according to an established law and therefore properly called *Sense* ; and acting in a similar manner upon all or at least upon a great majority of mankind and therefore properly called *common Sense*."—*Beattie's Essay on Truth*.

"Above all we must consider that as there is a sensible intuition, an *intuition* through the *Sense*, so there is likewise a rational *intuition* through the *Reason*. Each as a peculiar source of knowledge stands counter to the other ; and we can no more educe the latter from the former than we can educe the former from the latter. So likewise both hold a similar relation to the understanding (*Verstand*), and consequently to demonstration. Opposed to *intuition of sense* no demonstration is valid ; for all demonstration is only a reducing, a carrying back of the concept to the sensible intuition (empirical or pure), which affords its guarantee : and this, in reference to physical science, is the first and the last, the unconditionally valid, the absolute. On the same principle, no demonstration avails in opposition to the *intuition of reason*, which affords us a knowledge of supersensible objects, that is, affords us assurance of their reality and truth."—*Jacobi*.

"We have thus a revelation of nature, which does not recommend merely, but compels all and each of us to believe, and, through belief to receive those eternal truths which are vouchsafed to man."—*Ibid.*

"This Reason, this internal eye which immediately receives the light of existence, and apprehends existences as the bodily eye the outlines and the colours of the sensuous world is an immediate *sense* which contemplates the invisible."—"These facts are for us *mental intuitions*. In as much as they give us an instantaneous clear objective perception of reality they are entitled to the name of *intuition* (*Anschauung*); in as much as this intuition regards the objects of the invisible world, they deserve the attribute of *mental*."—*Ancillon.*

"I should have no objection to define Reason with Jacobi and with his friend Hemsterhuis as an organ bearing the same relation to spiritual objects the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary as the eye bears to material and contingent phenomena."—"Whatever is conscious Self-knowledge is Reason ; and in this sense it may be safely defined the organ of the supersensuous."—"In short the human understanding possesses two distinct organs, the outward sense, and "the mind's eye" which is reason : wherever we see that phrase (the mind's eye) in its proper sense and not as a mere synonyme of the memory or the fancy. In this way we reconcile the promise of Revelation that the blessed will see God, with

the declaration of St. John—God hath no one seen at any time.”—“Thrice blessed faculty of Reason ! all other gifts, though goodly and of celestial origin, health, strength, talents, all the powers and all the means of enjoyment, seem dispensed by chance or sullen caprice—thou alone, more than even the sunshine, more than the common air, art given to all men, and to every man alike.”—*The Friend by Coleridge.*

TESTIMONIES TO THE VALIDITY OF INTUITIONS.

PART II.

No 9.

March 1861.

“THAT the doctrine in question is not a new one nor even the language in which it has been recently stated an innovation in the received phraseology of logical Science has been shown by Dr. Reid in a collection of very interesting quotations which may be found in different parts of his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, more particularly in the 2nd. Chapter of the 6th. Essay. Nor has this doctrine been

generally rejected even by those writers who in their theories have departed the farthest from the ordinary opinions of the world."—*Dugald Stewart's Elements of Philosophy*.

"To denominate therefore such laws of belief as we have now been considering, *constituent elements of human reason*, while it seems quite unexceptionable in point of technical distinctness, cannot be justly censured as the slightest deviation from our habitual forms of speech."—"They form a part of those original *stamina* of human reason, which are equally essential to all the pursuits of science and to all the active concerns of life."—"To appeal to the light of human reason from the reasonings of the schools is surely an expression to which no good objection can be made on the score either of vagueness or novelty."—*Ibid.*

"To object to the authority of such primary intuitive belief, would thus be to reason against reason,—to affirm and deny at the same moment—and to own that the very arguments which we urge are unworthy of being received and credited."—*Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind by Thomas Brown*.

"All reasoning, then, the most sceptical be it remembered, as well as the most dogmatical must proceed on some principles which are taken for granted, not because we infer them by logical deduction, for this very inference must then itself be founded on some other principle assumed without proof; but because the

admission of these first principles is a necessary part of our intellectual constitution."—*Ibid.*

"These principles of intuitive belief, so necessary for our very existence, and too important, therefore, to be left to the casual discovery of reason, are, as, it were, an internal never-ceasing voice from the Creator and Preserver of our being. The reasonings of men, admitted by some and denied by others, have over us but a feeble power, which resembles the general frailty of man himself. These internal revelations from on high, however, are omnipotent like their Author. It is impossible for us to doubt them, because to disbelieve them would be to deny what our very constitution was formed to admit. Even the Atheist himself, therefore,—if, indeed, there be one who truly rejects a Creator and Ruler of the universe,—is thus every moment in which he adapts his conduct implicitly, and without reasoning, to these directions of the wisdom that formed him, obeying, with most exact subserviency, that very voice which he is professing to question or to deride."—*Ibid.*

"The knowledge which we receive through our intellectual powers is referable to two classes, these may be distinguished by the names of acquired knowledge, and intuitive or fundamental articles of belief.—*Abercrombie's Philosophy of the Moral Feelings.*

"These are the principles also treated of, in a former work, under the name of First Truths. They are not like our knowledge of the other



kind, the result of any process either of investigation or of reasoning ; and for the possession of them, no man either depends upon his own observation, or has recourse to that of other men. They are a part of his mental constitution arising with a feeling of absolute certainty, in every sound mind ; and while they admit of no proof by processes of reasoning, sophistical objections brought against them can be combated only by an appeal to the consciousness of every man, and to the absolute conviction which forces itself upon the whole mass of mankind."—"For if we do not believe them to arise, in this manner, by the spontaneous exercise of every uncorrupted mind, there are only two methods by which we can suppose them to originate ;—the one is a direct revelation from the Deity,—the other is a process of reasoning or of investigation, properly so called, analogous to that by which we acquire the knowledge of any principle in natural science. We cannot believe that they are derived entirely from revelation, because we find the belief existing where no revelation is known, and because we find the sacred writers, appealing to them as sources of conviction existing in the mental constitution of every man. There is an obvious absurdity, again, in supposing that principles which are to regulate the conduct of responsible beings, should be left to the chance of being unfolded by processes of reasoning, in which different minds may arrive at different conclusions, and in regard to which many are incapable

of following out any argument at all."—"Spontaneity gives truth ; reflection produces science." "Spontaneity is innocence, the golden age of thought." "Inspiration in all languages, is distinct from reflection ; it is the perception of truth ; I mean of essential and fundametal truths without the intervention of will and without mixture of personality." "For the sake of abridging and that we may have the subject in few words, I call spontaneity of reason this development of reason anterior to reflection, this power which reason has to seize at first upon truth, to comprehend it, and to admit it, without demanding and rendering to itself an account of it." "But beneath reflection there is still spontaneity ; when the scholar has denied the existence of God, listen to the man, interrogate him, take him unawares, and you will see that all his words envelop the idea of God, and that faith in God is without his recognition, at the bottom of his heart. The indestructible spontaneity of thought is always there which produces and sustains all essential truths."—"We do not begin with prose but with poetry, because we do not begin with reflection but with intuition and absolute affirmation."—"Everywhere under its instinctive form reason is equal to itself in all the generations of humanity and in all the individuals of which these different generations are composed." Primitive unity not supposing any distinction admits neither of error nor of difference ; but reflection in dividing the elements of thought by

considering them in the exclusion of one from the other brings error ; and in considering sometimes one, and sometimes another it produces variety of error and consequently difference. Thus man who at the foundation, and in the spontaneous flight of his intelligence, is identical with himself does not resemble himself in reflection at any two moments of his existence." "We must start from common sense and return to common sense under pain of extravagance."—*Victor Cousin's History of Philosophy*.—"We have thus seen that though the argument from common sense be an appeal to the natural convictions of mankind that it is not an appeal from the heretical conclusions of particular philosophies to the catholic principles of all philosophy. The prejudice which on this supposition has sometimes been excited against the argument is groundless."—*Sir Wm. Hamilton*.

"Nor can this assumption of the existence of some original bases of knowledge in the mind itself, be refused by any."—"Limiting, therefore, our consideration to the question of authority ; how it is asked, do these primary propositions—these cognitions at first hand—these fundamental facts, feelings, beliefs, certify us of their own veracity ? To this the only possible answer is—that as elements of our mental constitution—as the essential condition of our knowledge—they must by us be accepted as true. To suppose their falsehood, is to suppose that we are created capable of intelligence, in order to be

made the victims of delusion; that God is a deceiver, and the root of our nature a lie."—"The 2nd signification of Common Sense is when it denotes the complement of those cognitions and convictions which we receive from nature, which all men therefore possess in common and by which they trust the truth of knowledge and the morality of actions. This is the meaning in which the expression is now emphatically employed in philosophy and which may be therefore called its *philosophical* signification."—"When rightly understood therefore no valid objection can be taken to the argument of common sense considered in itself."—"It now remains to consider what are the essential notes or characters by which we are enabled to distinguish our original from our derivative convictions. These characters I think may be reduced to four ;—(1) their Incomprehensibility, (2)—their Simplicity, (3)—their Necessity and Absolute Universality, (4)—their comparative Evidence and certainty."—"The doctrine of common sense notwithstanding many schismatic aberrations is the one catholic and perennial philosophy."—"And yet although the past history of philosophy has in a great measure been only a history of variation and error yet the cause of this variation being known we obtain a valid ground of hope for the destiny of philosophy in future. Because since philosophy has hitherto been inconsistent with itself only in being inconsistent with the dictates of our natural beliefs."

"For truth is catholic and Nature one ;" it follows that philosophy has simply to return to natural consciousness to turn to unity and truth."—*Ibid.*

"And we would caution every reader, in the outset, against the supposition that the distinction [between the *logical* and the *intuitional* faculty which] we are about to develop somewhat at large, is anything at all novel in the history of mental philosophy. Far from that, it is almost as universal as philosophy itself, lying alike patent both in ancient and modern speculation."—*Philosophy of Religion*, J. D. Morell.

"Just as in all our conceptions of material things there is the *matter* which is contributed by one faculty, and the form by another, so in all the higher sciences, whether they be mathematical, moral, theological, ontological, or æsthetic, we depend entirely upon the intuitional consciousness to give us the concrete basis of them, and upon the logical consciousness to give us the scientific form."—*Ibid.*

"In all these instances we see that the primary elements of knowledge, the fundamental realities of the *true*, the *beautiful* and the *good*, all alike come to us *at once* by virtue of an intellectual sensibility, which apprehends them spontaneously and intuitively, just as in our perceptive consciousness we apprehend the outward reality of things around us."—*Ibid.*

"Reason up to a God and the best you can do is to hypostatize and deify the final product

of your own faculties ; but admit the reality of an intellectual intuition, (as the mass of mankind virtually do,) and the absolute stands before us in all its living reality."—*Ibid.*

"Now these primary elements of all the Sciences can never be communicated and never *learned* exegetically. Unless we have a direct consciousness of them, they must ever remain a deep mystery to us—just as no description could ever give to a blind man the notion of colour, or to a man who has no organ of taste the idea of bitter or salt."—*Ibid.*

"The logical consciousness is *individual*, the intuitional consciousness is *generic*."—*Ibid.*

"I am inclined to define Metaphysics as THE SCIENCE WHICH INQUIRES INTO THE ORIGINAL OR INTUITIVE CONVICTIONS OF THE MIND WITH A VIEW OF GENERALIZING AND EXPRESSING THEM AND ALSO OF DETERMINING, WHAT ARE THE OBJECTS REVEALED BY THEM.—*The Intuitions of the Mind by the Revd. James M'Cosh.*

"Laws of the former kind are of a higher or deeper nature ; they are the generalization of convictions carrying necessity with them and a consequent universality in their very nature. They are entitled to be regarded as in an especial sense philosophic principles, being the ground to which we come when we follow any system of truth sufficiently far down, and competent to act as a basis on which to erect a superstructure of science. They are truths of our original constitution having the sanction of Him

who hath given us our constitution and graven them there with his own finger."—*Ibid.*

"The 1st position I would lay down is that the mind must have something native or innate. A 2nd position may be maintained, that this something has rules, laws or properties. As a 3rd position it is capable of being established that the mind has original perceptions, which original perceptions may be described as intuitive. It is possible to defend a 4th position, that the mind can discover necessary and universal truth. It may be stated as a 5th position that the very acquisition of experience implies native laws or principles. A 6th position may be established, that reasoning proceeds on principles which cannot be proved by reasoning, but must be assumed and assumed as seen intuitively to be true."—*Ibid.*

"The primary mark of intuitive truth is self-evidence. Necessity is a secondary mark of intuitive truth. Catholicity may be employed as a tertiary test."—*Ibid.*

"It will be seen that our intuitive convictions, whether they relate to the true or the good, all conduct us to Him who is emphatically the True and the Good."—*Ibid.*

"Mind begins in faith, in holding for true the objective presented to it in sensible perception. Thus intuitive in its lowest energy it is equally so in its highest. If looking forward, it has no further explanation to render of the reality of the visible world than that it is present

in apprehension and therefore must be conceived as existent ; so looking upward from the sphere of finite reality it perceives a higher world of truth which equally makes itself good in apprehension. Such a higher power of intuition, by which we apprehend realities beyond the region of the sensible is one which is admitted by every school of philosophy, save that which from the extremely unphilosophical assumption lying at its basis, is bound to ignore every thing beyond the sensible. At the same time there have been endless disputes as to the special name and character of this transcendent intuition. For our purpose it matters not at all how it may be specially designated, or even understood, so that its reality is confessed ; whether for example it be identified more with the intellectual or moral side of our being. * * * * Whether therefore this loftiest energy of the soul—which relates it to a sphere of unconditioned objectivity as the lower intuitional power relates it to the sphere of the conditioned—be conceived of as Intelligence in the highest sense or as faith, it is for us of no consequence. As forming the highest expression of our mental activity it seems eminently to deserve the special name of reason which has often been applied to it.”—*Theism, by Professor John Tulloch.*

THE REVD. S. DYSON'S QUESTIONS ON BRAHMOISM ANSWERED.

No 10.

April 1861.

Questions Suggested on hearing a Lecture and reading a Tract No. 4 of a Series, entitled, "the Basis of Brahminism," "Brahminism stands upon the rock of Intuition."

1. WHAT is the Brahmic doctrine with regard to consciousness? Is it a special faculty of the mind as Reid and Stewart say? Or is it *Not* a special faculty of the mind as Sir W. Hamilton Brown, Payne, Mill, Spalding say, *i. e.*, is it a general term applicable to all the states of the mind indifferently?

2. If according to the Brahmic doctrine, consciousness is something different from intuition or "intuitional consciousness," what is the precise difference?

3. If according to the Brahmic theory, consciousness is a general term applicable to all sensations of the mind, is "intuitional consciousness" (A) a special intuitive religious faculty, or (B) certain intuitive religious truths?

4. Taking intuitional consciousness to mean

an intuitive faculty, is the authority of Sir W. Hamilton or other metaphysicians appealed to in support of this view ?

5. If not, what are the proofs of the existence of this universal intuitive faculty ?

6. If this intuitional consciousness be a special intuitive faculty, does this faculty (a) generate, produce, originate religious truths, or (b) does it only authoritatively test religious truths, *i. e.* discriminate between religious truths and errors ?

7. If the intuitional consciousness be the faculty which originates religious truths ; (1) does the faculty naturally and of itself originate these truths ; (2) or does it depend upon external influences and education for development in order to the origination of these truths ; (3) or does it partly originate some truths, when in an undeveloped state, and partly some other truths, or these same truths more clearly in a developed state ?

8. If case (1) be the Brahmic theory, how does the Brahmo account for and explain the wide diversities and contradictions in religious matters which notoriously always have existed, and do at this day exist among all nations under heaven ?

9. If case (2) be the Brahmic theory, what are the powers and characteristics of developed and undeveloped intuitional consciousness respectively ?

10. What, according to the Brahmic theory,

is the meaning of the phrase "self-evident truths" and "self-produced truths?"

11. According to the Brahmic theory, is there any difference between "self-evident truths" and "self-produced truths?"

12. If there be any difference, will the Brahmo state in what that difference consists?

13. If, according to the Brahmic theory, (case 2) education be necessary to the development and working of the intuitional consciousness, does the Brahmo allow or deny that this necessary education has ever existeth in countries into which the light of Christianity has never penetrated, for instance Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Hindustan?

14. If they allow that this necessary education has existed in these countries must they not also allow that the religious doctrines of these countries must necessarily be the fundamental religious truths of Brahmoism, especially on these points; (1) the nature and attribute of God; (2) the rule of moral duty; (3) a future state?

15. If the Brahmo will not allow that the religious doctrines of the people of these countries are the fundamental intuitive truths of Brahmoism, can he state why and on what principle they are not?

16. If they are received, will the Brahmo, on his theory, explain and account for the following difficulties?

1.—The inconsistencies and contradictions

in religions on these points which existed in each country above specified.

- 2.—The inconsistencies and contradictions which existed among the doctrines of the different countries on these points.
- 3.—The inconsistencies and contradictions which exist among all these doctrines of all these countries and the present Brahmic doctrine.
- 4.—The inconsistencies and contradictions, which exist among the various opinions of infidels in modern educated countries, *e. g.* Theists, Pantheists, Atheists, all of many kinds.

17. Whatever be the Brahmic theory with regard to the intuitional consciousness, will the Brahmo state whether case (1) case (2) case (3) specify these truths thus originated.

18. Reverting to question 6 alternative (b), if the Brahmic theory be that this intuitional consciousness is not an originating faculty, but only a verifying faculty, *i. e.* a power of discriminating between religious truths and errors, what are the boundaries, if any, and what the extent of this verifying faculty?

19. Does the Brahmo allow or deny that there may be religious truths reaching beyond the powers and grasp of this verifying faculty?

20. If the Brahmo allows that there may be religious truths lying beyond its sphere and province, by what faculties and by what means

does he distinguish them from those which are within the boundaries of this verifying faculty ?

21. And, as they lie beyond the sphere of this verifying faculty, will the Brahmo accept them or reject them ?

21. And, as they lie beyond the sphere of this verifying, faculty, will the Brahmo accept them or reject them ?

22. If he accept them, as his intuitional consciousness does not apply; on what grounds does he accept them, and if he reject them, as his intuitional consciousness does not apply, on what grounds does he reject them ?

23. Reverting to question 19, if the Brahmo deny that there may be religious truths beyond the sphere of his intuitional consciousness, it is enquired on what grounds ?

24. Is it because the intuitional consciousness of the Brahmo is omniscient and is *already* acquainted with *all religious* truths ?

25. Does the Brahmo allege that doctrines which his verifying faculty rejects are *ipso facto* proved to be erroneous ?

26. And in that case does the Brahmo assert infallibility to be an attribute of his intuitional consciousness ?

27. If the Brahmo deny that there may be religious truths beyond the sphere of his intuitional consciousness, and assert that his intuitional consciousness is the limit of religious truths, by what means will he prove the existence of this intuitional consciousness to ten men who

express their doubts of their possessing it? And if the Brahmo assert that he can prove the existence of this faculty to other people, on what principle does he deny the possibility of external revelation?

28. And how will he prove that there may not be religious truths beyond the boundaries of this intuitional consciousness?

29. When the Brahmo rejects the supernatural and mysterious doctrines of the Bible such as divine inspiration, divine spiritual influence, the incarnation of Christ, is it because these doctrines are within the boundaries of this verifying faculty or without?

30. If within, is not the Brahmo claiming for his verifying faculty divine knowledge?

31. If without, why does the Brahmo reject what he confessedly is unable to give judgment upon?

32. Reverting to question 3 alternative B. if his intuitional consciousness be not an intuitive faculty, but intuitive truths, and these truths exist in every man's mind, then (1) are they to be found in every country, among all nations, underlying all religions; or (2) have they no objective existence till evoked by external influences and education, or (3) are they partly objective and partly subjective till evoked by education?

33. If case (1) what are the truths which underlie all religions with regard for instance to the three points mentioned above; (1) the

nature and attributes of God ; (2) the rule of moral ; (3) future life ?

34. On this Brahmic theory of the universal existence of certain intuitive truths, how does the Brahmo account for and explain the wide diversities and contradictions in religious matters which notoriously always have existed and do at this day exist among all nations under heaven ?

35. If [case (2)] the Brahmic theory be the non-existence of these intuitive truths objectively, till evoked by education ; does the Brahmo allow or deny that this necessary education has ever existed in countries into which the light of Christianity has never penetrated, for instance ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Hindustan ?

36. If it be allowed that this necessary education has existed in these countries, must they not also allow that the religious doctrines of these countries must necessarily be the fundamental religions of Brahminism ; especially on these points ; (1) the nature and attributes of God ; (2) the rule of moral duty ; (3) a future state ?

37. If the Brahmo will not allow the religious doctrines of the people of these countries to be the fundamental intuitive truths of Brahminism can he state why, and on what principle they are not ?

38. If the Brahmo allow that the religious truths of the people of these countries are the fundamental intuitive truths of Brahminism, will

he on his theory account for and explain the following difficulties.

- 1.—The inconsistencies and contradictions in religions on these points which existed in each country above specified,
- 2.—The inconsistencies and contradictions which existed among the religious doctrines of different countries.
- 3.—The inconsistencies and contradictions which exist among all these doctrines of all these countries and the present Brahmic doctrine.
- 4.—The inconsistencies and contradictions which exist among the various opinions of infidels in modern educated countries, *e. g.* Theists, Atheists, Pantheists, all of many kinds.

39. If case (3) question 32 be the Brahmic theory, what are the truths which originally exist in an objective form and those which derive their objective existence from education?

40. What are the intuitive truths altogether which constitute the Brahmic system?

41. Is the authority of Sir W. Hamilton appealed to in support of this Brahmic doctrine of intuitive truths?

42. If not, what are the proofs of the existence of these intuitive religious truths?

43. When the Brahmo meets with religious truths in the Bible or elsewhere, does he regard them as truths because they fall in with his intuitional consciousness contemplated as a

verifying faculty according to the first theory ; or is it because they fall in with intuitional consciousness regarded as consisting of "intuitive truths" ?

44. Does the Brahmo *allow* or *deny* that there may be religious truths outside and beyond these fundamental intuitive truths of Brahminism ?

45. If the Brahmo *deny* that there may be religious truths outside and beyond these fundamental intuitive truths, how does he clear himself of the charge of arrogating Divine Omniscience ?

46. And as all other truth mathematical, scientific, &c. is *not* intuitive, on what principle is it alleged that all religious truth is intuitive ?

47. But if the Brahmo *allow* that there may be religious truths outside and beyond these intuitive truths of Brahminism, and as *truth in itself* is desirable, will the Brahmo not allow that the revelation of these admitted extra-religious truths to us by God is desirable ?

48. But as on the Brahmic theory "miracles are impossible," can he show *how except by working a miracle*, God *can* mark a revelation of these extra-religious truths ?

49. And also, as on the Brahmic theory "miracles cannot authenticate a doctrine," will the Brahmo show how except by working miracles God *can* prove to us, (1) that he has given us a revelation and (2) that such and such doctrines are the truths of that revelation ?

50. However, supposing it to be possible

that God could (1) give us a revelation, and (2) prove that he had given a revelation of these extra truths, the Brahmo must either accept them or reject them, but as they are *without* the number of his intuitive truths, on what principles can the Brahmo either accept them or reject them?

51. If all religious truths are intuitive and always have been so, how has it come to pass that three-fourths of the human race are in such a deplorably ignorant condition with regard to these very intuitive truths?

52. If bad education be assigned as the cause, as these religious truths have been intuitive from the first, how has it come to pass that education is so universally bad?

53. If good education be then absolutely necessary to the evoking of these intuitive truths, then, as education cannot be accomplished but by books, on what grounds does the Brahmo assert that an external revelation from God is impossible, and that God cannot accomplish even that by a book which men accomplish so well by education through books?

54. As the members of the Brahmo Somaj, with one or two exceptions, invariably receive the *sacraments* of Hinduism (*jatakormmo, aunno-prasan, upanayan, &c.*) themselves, and also administer them to their children, can they state on what grounds any one is to arrive at the conviction that they themselves are really disciples of Brahmoism?

55. If by their own confessed practice, the Brahmo Somaj be thus put out of the number of this universal religion of Brahmissm, can they state in what part of the world there is a sect, community or Church which subscribes to the doctrines of Brahmissm as based on intuition ?

56. Can the Brahmo Somaj point to any part of the world, except in Christian educated countries, where there are individuals professing the doctrines of Brahmissm thus based on intuition ?

57. Can the Brahmo Somaj refer to any part of the world, except in Christian educated countries, where there are individuals professing the doctrines of Brahmissm thus based on intuition ?

58. Can the Brahmo Somaj refer to any history (which is *not an external relation*) which treats of the rise and progress of so-called intuitionál religion in any country in the world ?

59. If the Brahmo Somaj refer to any books which state the phases of faith and sorts of creeds of various individuals, how can they account for those extreme discrepancies of intuitionál views on the fundamental doctrines of Brahmissm which are thus brought to light ?

60. And if the Brahmo Somaj refers to these books which thus indicate these extreme discrepancies, what must the reference to these books be supposed to prove ?

61. And if the Brahmo Somaj refer to any books at all in proof or illustration of their

doctrines ; as an external revelation is impossible, on what possible principle can they refer to books, and yet deny the possibility of an external revelation ?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

1. Distinguish between intuition and consciousness.

Intuition denotes the native, presentative, involuntary, primitive, and catholic cognitions of the mind. Consciousness is a generic term applicable to all the states of the mind.

2. Is intuition a faculty or a truth ?

It signifies both.

3. Distinguish between self-produced and self-evident truths.

Those truths are self-produced which have their *origin* in themselves : those truths are self-evident which have their *evidence* in themselves.

4. Does intuition produce religious truths, or does it only discriminate between religious truths and errors ?

Intuition *spontaneously* apprehends certain truths. The understanding *reflects* on them. The former furnishes *materials* : the latter gives *forms* to those materials, and thereby constructs

science. To analyze, classify, discriminate, infer, judge, are processes of the understanding not intuition.

5. Does intuition depend upon external influence for its origination ?

The human mind depends upon external influences not for the *origination* but *awakening* of its original intuitive idea, its feelings and faculties.

6. Are there other religious truths besides the intuitive ?

Yes : truths derived from experience.

7. What are the proofs of the existence of religious intuitive truths ? If so, on what grounds ? If not, what do the following expressions frequently used by distinguished Christian philosophers and theologians signify—*Law of God written in the heart, Light of conscience, Internal revelation, Never-ceasing voice of God within, God's original revelation of himself to man ?*

What is the meaning of Rom. II. 14—15 ?

"For when the gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves.

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

If the following interpretation of this passage given by Doddridge be correct, is it not clear

that the Bible bears irrefragable testimony to the existence of intuitive truths ?

"For when the Gentiles who have not the written Revelation of the divine law do, by an *instinct of nature* and in consequence of the *untaught* dictates of their own mind, the moral duties required by the precepts of the law, these having not the benefit of an express and revealed law are nevertheless a law unto themselves. The *voice of nature* is their rule, and they are *inwardly* taught by the *constitution of their own minds* to revere it by the law of that God by whom it was formed. And they who are in this state do evidently show the work of the law in the *most important moral precepts written upon their hearts, by the same Divine Hand that engraved the decalogue upon the tables given to Moses.*"

8. Account for the diversities of religious opinions among mankind.

Account for the diversities of religious opinions among Christians.

9. Is intuition sufficient ? If so, why is education necessary ?

Is the Bible sufficient ? If so, why was Luther necessary.

10. Is not the necessity of education an argument amongst the existence of intuitions ?

Is not the possibility of education an argument for the existence of intuitions ? Does education originate religious and moral ideas ? Does it not merely tend to *educe*, call forth,

awaken, and develop them ? Can education give a blind man an idea of colour ?

11. If Brahmoism or intuitional religion is to be found only in Christian educated countries, is it not reasonable to conclude that it is the result of Christian education ?

Is it reasonable to conclude that that is Christian education which teaches one to deny the divinity of Christ, to protest against the infallibility of the Bible, to reject the dogmas of eternal hell and vicarious atonement, and, in short, to accept that much of Christianity which tallies with the inner revelation ?

Is it reasonable to conclude that those truths are the result of Christian education which men learn "inwardly" by an "instinct of nature and in consequence of the *untaught* dictates of their own mind."

12. How is it that in spite of the existence of intuitive religious truths in the mind such detestable systems of idolatry prevailed in the world ?

How is it that in spite of the Gospel such detestable sects prevailed in Christendom as the Adamites, Valentinians, Gnostics, Manicheans, Agnoites, Carpocratians, Ebionites, Ecclesaites, and Saturninians ?

13. Is a higher revelation than intuition desirable ?

Is a higher revelation than the Bible desirable ?

Yes, because we all "see through a glass darkly." But as our natural capacities are limited

we must learn to be satisfied with the truths which are vouchsafed to us through them, constituting as they do the only knowable truths of salvation this side of the grave.

14. Why do the Brahmos deny the possibility of book-revelation?

Because revelation is subjective, not objective.

15. How is it that the Brahmos refer to books and yet deny the possibility of book-revelation?

Because they do not regard those books as book-revelations.

16. How can God authenticate a revelation of religious doctrines except by working miracles?

Can miracles authenticate a doctrine? Does not the following passage in the Bible clearly show that they cannot?

"For there shall arise false christs and false prophets: and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect"—Math. XXIV. 24.

If it be contended that miracles can only authenticate truth (*i. e.* prove truth to be true) will the Christians state (1) how that truth can be ascertained except by intuition and (2) are not miracles wholly unnecessary if they cannot prove a doctrine to be from God? Can the authority of Dr. Arnold be appealed to on this subject? "Faith, without reason," says he, "is not properly faith, but mere power-worship; and power-worship may be devil-worship; for *it is reason which entertains the idea of God—and idea essentially*

made up of truth and goodness, no less than of power. A sign of power, exhibited to the senses might, through them, dispose the whole man to acknowledge it as divine; yet power in itself is not divine, it may be devilish.....How can we distinguish God's voice from the voice of evil?We distinguish it, by comparing it with that idea of God which reason *intuitive* enjoys, the *gift of reason being God's original revelation of himself to man.* Now if the *voice* which comes to us from the *unseen world* agree not with this idea, we have no choice but to pronounce it not to be God's voice; for no signs of power, in confirmation of it, can alone prove it to be from God."

17. Are they true disciples of Brahmoism who receive the sacraments of idolatry?

Brahmoism is opposed to idolatry of both kinds—material and spiritual. The essence of her teachings is this:—Worship neither the objects of the external world nor the passions of the heart; but serve the One True God, and do all things unto His glory.

REVELATION.

No. 11.

May 1861.

I. You have already satisfactorily explained to me the psychological validity of the *basis* of Brahmoism both by arguments from the consciousness of man and testimonies of distinguished metaphysicians. Let us now proceed to discuss the theory of revelation, and the other *doctrines* of your creed. It is my impression, as I have already told you, that although there are certain spiritual instincts in the mind—call them intuitions, common sense, spontaneous reason, or natural beliefs, as you choose—they are insufficient to give man the light of truth, and that therefore a tangible revelation from God in the shape of a book is desirable, nay indispensable. Would you venture to deny that the wisest and best men in all ages have felt the necessity of such a revelation, and declared their natural reason inadequate to meet their spiritual wants? Is human nature infallible? Does it require no light from heaven to lead it to salvation? Are you not yourself conscious of the innumerable frailties and weaknesses of your nature? Taking these into consideration how can Brahmoism pretending to be a rational system of faith wholly discard revelation?

B. No, my friend, Brahmoism does not discard revelation. We believe that our understandings are not sufficient to give us salvation ; and we acknowledge the paramount importance and necessity of a light from on high. We account revelation as the only way through which we come in contact with the saving truths of the spiritual world. The scriptures of all religions are regarded by us as rich repositories of what is noble, pure, and saving ; and we accept the truths which are in them with profound reverence, although we do not identify them with revelation.

I. A very whimsical theory indeed ! You admit the necessity and importance of revelation, and of all scriptures—the Bible, Alcoran, and the Shasters : yet you identify none of them with revelation. Will you explain yourself fully ?

B. With the greatest pleasure. In conducting our discussion on this highly important problem of controversial theology it is necessary that we should ascertain, first of all, the essence of revelation *i. e.* determine what it is and how it exists in the mind as a fact of our religious consciousness, and then trace it out in its diversified bearings both theoretical and practical. We shall thereby be able to divest it of those errors which sectarianism has encrusted around it, and likewise protect it, by establishing its psychological validity, from the contemptuous scoffings of the sceptical school. The first ques-

tion, then, which we have to solve in this important inquiry is—what is revelation ?

I. Precisely so. Well, what is your idea of revelation ?

B. Revelation considered in the abstract, *i. e.* apart from the polemical opinions of sectarian creeds, denotes religious knowledge communicated by God to man. Sects differ as to the medium, place, and time of such communication ; but they agree as to its essence—the nature and the source. If this is revelation we have to inquire next whether it is *possible*, for if there be valid objections to its possibility the whole doctrine of revelation falls to the ground. However the solution of this question would by no means seem difficult if you consider it psychologically, and call to mind what I said regarding the two-fold nature of our cognitive consciousness. For psychology is the legitimate way of deciding the question : and with its aid we are enabled to affirm without any difficulty or hesitation that there are certain cognitions in the mind which are above, independent of, and anterior to our reasoning. These are the facts of intuitive consciousness ; they are native, constitutional, original truths ; they are the voice of nature in the soul, and hence they may be called the communication of God, for

‘ The voice of nature is the voice of God.’

They are not the elaborations of our reflective faculties. They have not their origin in the will ; nor are they generated by impressions

from the external world. Hence their source is the Deity ; for self, God, and the world constitute the three " ideas of reason." " When therefore" says Victor Cousin " man does homage to God for the truths which he is able to refer neither to the impressions which this world gives to his senses nor to his own personality he relates them to their true source ; and the absolute affirmation of truth without reflection, inspiration, enthusiasm is a veritable revelation." From God then flows the blessed stream of intuitive truths : He is the author of intuitive revelation. Several theologians and philosophers have taken this view of intuitive or original truths of the mind, and have called them by such names as Internal Revelation, Divinity in the soul, Oracle of God, Never-ceasing voice of the Creator. Such being the case, there is nothing, I trust, to prevent your acquiescing in the conclusion that revelation is possible in the intuitional consciousness. •

I. I have nothing to object to in what you have said, as your observations seem to be only an application of the argument whose correctness I have already admitted. Now, proceed.

B. I will carry the argument further. I propose to show that not only is intuition a revelation from God, but it is the only possible revelation ; in other words no other revelation than the intuitional is possible.

I. Do you mean to say that book-revelation is at once impossible ? Is not this a gratui-

tous assumption? There is the Bible—the wonder of ages: it is a standing revelation. What do you mean by questioning its possibility at this time of the day?

B. A book-revelation is self-contradictory and suicidal. Revelation is a state of the mind, a process of intelligence, a truth, an actual fact of consciousness. Hence a book-revelation, inasmuch as it is a book, an external object, cannot be scientifically called a revelation. Revelation is subjective not objective.

I. That is really puerile. Grant that intuitive truths communicated by God constitute true revelation. If these truths be embodied in a book, will not that book be entitled to be called a revelation to all mankind?

B. Certainly not. Such a book can only prove that its author received revelation from God: but it is no revelation to me. That which is a revelation to you does not necessarily become a revelation to me, or to any other person. In order that it may be a revelation to me, the very same process in which you received it must be repeated in my case: in other words I must intuitively realize the same in my mind. Else that revelation would be no revelation to me. Besides a book is an appeal not to the intuition but to the understanding. It is but a field for the exercise of the intellectual powers. We do not apprehend its truths as soon as we come in contact with it. We are called upon to interpret words, phrases, sentences, evolve the latent

meaning of the text, draw inferences with the aid of reasoning processes : it is only in this way that we can acquire and enjoy its truths. This evidently holds good in the case of the so-called book-revelations, for these, notwithstanding they are revelations, are still books, and are therefore treated by us as such. The result is that the actual revelation to each reader is not the whole book, but the amount of truth realized by him. Is there not then something absurd in the attempts generally made to hold up certain books as standing revelations to all mankind ?

I. But you don't seem to take into account the infallibility of book-revelation. Your remarks only apply to those *fallible* books which, although they are human compositions, are upheld by the superstitious as revelations of God. But if a book be found which speaks truth, all truth, and nothing but the truth, would you not accept it as a revelation from God ?

B. Not until it is actually present in our consciousness as truth, all truth, and nothing but the truth. The circumstance of infallibility, even if admitted, does not in any way bridge the gulf between the subjective and the objective. The infallible book is still outside my mind : what avails then its infallibility ?

I. I see you will not readily let go your hobby of subjective. However, I admit that book-revelation is not itself revelation, but only a *means* of revelation. Its object is to afford a fixed code of morality and religion, and by

actually impressing it on the reader's mind help him to find truth. No body denies that it is an external thing ; but it aims to produce truth in the minds of all men—truth and nothing but the truth, so that the world may be saved from the manifold prejudices and corruptions which inevitably proceed from the unaided speculations of the mind. This is the object of revelation ; this the final cause of that dispensation of Providence.

B. That may be its object ; but no book-revelation ever accomplished it. The infallibility of book-revelation might look very well as a theory, a dogma ; but practically it is useless. The reason is obvious. The infallible word of God is submitted to the judgment of a certain number of people, to be dealt in the way they choose : they interpret the passages of the book, construe words, and draw conclusions according to their respective arbitrary views and opinions. And what is the result ? In consequence of different interpretations different theories and doctrines start up : these give birth to hostile churches and sects. These churches again in course of time undergo many schisms : and thus divisions and subdivisions arise amongst the upholders of the same book. Thus far from securing unity of opinion and faith the infallible book originates innumerable differences and even contradictions and hostilities. This is the philosophy of the argument. It is easy to verify it historically. Examine the history of Christianity,

and you will at once find that the Bible has not succeeded in opposing its fixedness to the prevalence of jarring opinions and even diametrically opposite theories. Though guarded within the holy sanctuary of an avowed infallibility it has not been able to protect itself from the influences of sectarianism. Not only in the rendering of passages and words have different and contradictory opinions been offered, but even in the explanation of some of its fundamental tenets. The Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, the Gnostic, the Quaker, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Calvinist, the Universalist, the Unitarian started from the same book, the same fixed text, yet went different ways: and there is perhaps between the most devout Roman Catholic and the staunchest Unitarian as much disparity, essentially speaking, as between a Hindoo and a Mahometan. Nay, as intelligence is widening, and private judgment becoming more independent and liberal, the Church of Christ is being divided into more sections. The great excitement created by the "Essays and Reviews" of the *septim contra Christum* distinctly shows that the Church of England cannot long remain as an integral body. The fact is, an infallible book-revelation without infallible interpretation is simply useless. Infallible Hebrew or Sanscrit or Arabic necessitates infallible translation: infallible translations require infallible commentaries and criticisms, infallible dictionary and chronology, infallible history and theology &c.,

In short, in order that a book-revelation may fairly stand out as the infallible word of God for all practical purposes, it is indispensable that all the lights by which we are to arrive at its meaning must be infallible too. But even this is not all. Let the text be infallible; let all means by which it should be interpreted be also infallible: the question still stares us in the face—how can a book which is all truth interpreted by infallible keys communicate to our minds all truth?—how can objective infallibility convert itself into a subjective fact? Is the working mind, the interpreting agent infallible? This problem must be satisfactorily solved ere the doctrine of infallibility can be accepted. For what avails a splendid array of objective infallibilities, if the process of interpretation and comprehension is to be conducted by our fallible judgments? Let there be a world of outward infallibilities: “the mind is its own world, and can create a hell out of heaven.”

It is clear then that a book whether fallible or infallible cannot be identified with revelation, and truths revealed can only mean truth infallibly revealed in actual consciousness. The essence of revelation lies not in the outward book, but in the “kingdom within”—not in the text, but in the soul. To the truth of this Christendom bears ample and undeniable testimony. What does the distinction between the “letter” and the “spirit” signify? What means the doctrine that none unenlightened by the Holy

Ghost can understand the truths of the Bible ? No Christian can deny that the Bible is not sufficient ; that the mere letter, the mere book is nothing ; and that there is an essential difference between the Bible as a book and the Bible as a revelation—the Bible read by those who are not spiritually enlightened and the Bible read with the aid of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus, whatever view we may take of the subject, unless we are dogmatical, we are at last brought to the same central principle that revelation is a spiritual communication made to the mind, and is realized and realizable in the intuitional consciousness only.

I. All this I admit ; and I think every unprejudiced man, whatever his creed be, should do the same. You take a scientific and catholic view of the subject, and dwell only on the actual capacities of the mind in its relation to revelation : your observations therefore cannot but be acceptable to all.* No good reasoner can deny that revelation is a state of the mind, and that unless it is such it is idle to argue the excellency or the infallibility of an outward book. But it strikes me that you are dilating on the *potentialities* of human nature. Your arguments do not satisfactorily meet the *actual* deficiencies and wants of mankind. It may be admitted that a revelation of saving truths is possible in the intuitive consciousness. But this revelation does not actually exist in all men. Man has practically turned astray from the truth ; darkness is

within him ; his nature is depraved. Under such circumstances is not an external revelation necessary which may deliver the soul from ignorance and impurity, and regenerate it in faith and holiness ?

B. Undoubtedly. Such a revelation is indispensable ; and its importance it is impossible to exaggerate. This is revelation in its secondary and comprehensive signification. In this sense it means an outward objective collection of principles coincident with our natural and intuitive convictions, which renders more vivid our intuitive apperceptions, and aids us in the attainment of truth and salvation. Such an objective revelation far from militating against the argument already enunciated does rather presuppose and depend upon the intuitions of the mind, in so much that they constitute the life and evidence of all objective revelations.

I. That is only *negative* evidence and has hardly any value : for there are many passages, for instance, in the Bible which do not tally with any principle within, but which must nevertheless be accepted as true. The fact is that miracles and external evidences in general constitute the only positive evidence of book-revelation—the foundation on which rational faith in the doctrines of book-revelation rests.*

B. How can that be ? Miracles can never

* "Taking into account the various questions whose answers, on the one side or the other, form the sum total of Evidences for or against the claims of the Christian Faith ;—

authenticate a doctrine—so says the Bible itself. Truth as well as untruth is supported by miracles : good men and bad men are represented as miracle-workers.† How then can truth be

the genuineness and authenticity of the documents ; the judgment and good faith of the writers ; the testimony to the actual occurrence of prophecies and miracles, and their relation to the religious teaching with which they are connected ; the character of the Teacher Himself, that one portrait, which, in its perfect purity and holiness and beauty, stands alone and unapproached in human history or human fiction ; those rites and ceremonies of the elder Law, so significant as typical of Christ so strange and meaningless without Him ; those predictions of the promised Messiah, whose obvious meaning is rendered still more manifest by the futile ingenuity which strives to pervert them ; the history of the rise and progress of Christianity, and its comparison with that of other religions ; the ability or inability of human means to bring about the results which it actually accomplished ; its antagonism to the current ideas of the age and country of its origin ; its effects as a system on the moral and social condition of subsequent generations of mankind ; its fitness to satisfy the wants and console the sufferings of human nature ; the character of those by whom it was first promulgated and received ; the sufferings which attested the sincerity of their convictions ; the comparative trustworthiness of ancient testimony and modern conjecture ; the mutual contradictions of conflicting theories of unbelief, and the inadequacy of all of them to explain the facts for which they are bound to account ;—*taking all these and similar questions into full consideration*, are you prepared to affirm, as the result of the whole inquiry, that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, or an enthusiast, or a mythical figment ; and his disciples, crafty and designing, or well-meaning but deluded men ? For *be assured, that nothing short of this is the conclusion which you must maintain*, if you reject *one jot or one tittle* of the whole doctrine of Christ.”—The Limits of Religious Thought by H. L. Mansel, B. D. pp. 161-2.

† Deut. XII. 1-5 ; Matth. VII. 22, 23 ; XXIV. 24 ; Mark IX. 38 ; 2 Cor. XI. 13.

distinguished from untruth, a prophet from an impostor? If not by miracles, evidently by some other criterion independent of miracles. What connection truth has with miracles, both external senses and the understanding fail to ascertain. Truth is truth, and untruth untruth whether supported or unsupported by miraculous exhibitions. Truth is truth simply because it is truth, and untruth untruth simply because it is untruth. Moreover the whole theory of external evidences particularly amounts to a perfectly useless dogma, to say the least. If Christianity rests on the pedestal of external evidences as the sole testimony to its infallibility, if a critical study of and an absolute belief in these evidences constitute the condition on which Christian faith can be accepted, I can venture to say with Mr. Young, the author of the Province of Reason, "there is not a rational believer in revelation in existence at this moment. There never has been a rational believer in revelation, not one individual, in any age....." Talk of Hebrew, Greek, Chaldaic, Syriac, and other languages of ancient codices, ancient versions, of historical, scientific philological, critical, hermeneutical researches and studies, of prophecies and miracles and inspiration, and the kinds of investigation belonging to them! what do, what can the myriads of good Christian people know about any of these things? Nothing, absolutely nothing." Such a rational belief is absolutely impossible. Indeed it is an untenable theory that Christian

faith is possible only as the result of the historical study of its external evidences. Alas for Christianity if so it were ! If then the divinity of the Bible, so far as the faith of its followers is concerned, does not depend upon miracles nor external evidences in general, how is it to be verified ?

I. By the simple yet heaven-born truths which the Bible contains. The faith of "the myriads of good Christian people" rests on these truths : and historical and logical speculations form no part of the *simplicities* of Christian faith.

B. Precisely so. You mean to say Christianity stands on the moral evidences of the Bible. Do you not ?

I. Yes, these are the only evidences which, as they are "accessible to all men and to all ages" form actually the basis of Christian faith.*

B. Well, do not such evidences presuppose a light within us which enables us to distinguish truth from error ? When we accept the truths of the Bible do we not do so because they find a

* A true Revelation, addressed to all mankind, and destined for all ages, must be attested by evidence adequate and accessible to all men and to all ages. It must carry with it its own permanent and unfading credentials.....The superhuman powers of its Preacher can authenticate it only to those who witness the exertion of them, and—more faintly and feebly—to those who have received and scrutinized *their* direct testimony :—The superhuman excellence of its doctrines may authenticate it through all time, and must constitute, therefore, its only adequate and abiding proof.—Creed of Christendom by W. R. Greg.

response, an assent, an echo within us—because they tally and harmonise with the truths engraven on the soul ?

I. Undoubtedly.

B. Is there not then within us even according to those who uphold book-revelation, a subjective light of truth, a “law written on the heart ;” and is it not in accordance with this law that makes us accept and follow the many saving and eternal truths which are in the gospel ? If such is the case why shall we worship any objective revelation in particular ? why shall we become bibliolaters ? Are there not intuitive truths in the Koran and the Shasters, in Nanuck and Hafez ? Is there not much to make us wise and righteous unto salvation in all these books and thousand others ? Whatever tends to enkindle noble sentiments, remove impurities, awaken faith, and bestir the will to practical virtue—whatever leads us to know and love the truth as it is in God is fairly entitled to be called revelation : it is immaterial where it is found. Such is the catholic teaching of Brahmoism in regard to book-revelation. This however is only an application of the secondary signification I have already adverted to. But the application does not stop here. Books are not the only enlighteners of the mind. Does not the material universe edify us ? Experience must reply—yes. Indeed the volume of nature displays throughout a moral purport. Every object in the universe, from the stupendous orbs revolving in the

air to the smallest grain of sand reveals God. His power and majesty, His wisdom and justice, His love and providence shine everywhere. No one who has studied the wonders and beauties of nature can deny that sanctifying knowledge and saving truths are not confined to sermons and psalms—that there is nothing in the physical or the mental world which cannot edify and even save the soul—that the whole of nature is ever and anon preaching millionvoiced the truths of religion and the glories of the Almighty Creator. To “find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing” is certainly not a poetical illusion, but the experience of faith.

Thus if revelation is taken in its primary and literal signification, viz. knowledge communicated by God, it is possible only as a fact of the mind, and cannot therefore be identified with books or other external objects, however rich they may be with moral and religious significance. It is altogether subjective, and hence whatever truth remains in an objectified state is beyond its province. The dogma of book-revelation therefore falls to the ground. If on the other hand revelation is understood in its secondary acceptation, viz. whatever teaches us precious doctrines, and elevates our moral and religious conceptions and feelings, far from being confined to the texts of any particular book as the exclusive sacred repository of divine truths, it extends over all books that inculcate truths—

nay it embraces the whole universe as a living revelation. Such is our doctrine of revelation. If from its theoretical we turn our eyes for a moment to its practical aspect we land in conclusions no less gratifying. It leads us to forsake all prejudices and bigotry, and cull truth wherever we can find it. Whether in the pages of the Bible or the Koran, whether in the wonders of the phenomena of the mind, or the beauties and sublimities of the external world, whether in the magnificent starry convex above or the boundless ocean below, whether in the picturesque valley variegated with vernal flowers or the sweet strains of feathered songsters vibrating through the forest, whether in the development of human nature so magnificently exhibited in the amphitheatre of history or in the principles of piety and love vividly portrayed in the biographies of great men—wherever we can find truth there we should go and accept it. We are thus taught the salutary lesson that truth is more precious than books—living spirit more than the dead letter—saving doctrine more than creeds and churches. Thus we are summoned to lay down all prejudices for, age, locality, and person, and reverentially accept truth whether offered by a Jew or gentile, Christian or a heathen, Hindoo or Mahomedan. Thus while different sects repair to their respective scriptures, and fight against each other to vindicate their own, a Brahmo beholds the Great Revealer, the Source of all revelation, in

the region of his intuitive consciousness, and there receives at His feet the direct teachings of sanctifying knowledge : and while they worship the Bible, the Koran, or the Vedas, and shut up truth within the pales of time, place, and person, he seeks revelation in all times, in all places, and in all objects, for God is omnipresent and ever-living.

1. An excellent doctrine unquestionably. At once spiritual and catholic, rational in theory and useful in practice, it recommends itself to every liberal mind, to every soul that thirsts after wisdom and salvation. It is sectarian bigotry alone that leads men to reject it ; for whoever seeks truth for its sake must refuse to fall prostrate beneath the authority of a particular book or person. Truth is neither yours nor mine. It is confined neither to Jerusalem nor Arabia, neither to Jesus nor to Mahomet. It does not hang on the accidents of age or country, man or book. Why then do denominationalists hate and accurse each other, assuming that all beyond the pales of their holy church is error and untruth, and that their respective revelations are the only true revelations ? Nor can I understand how Brahmos can be charged with having stolen all their truths from the Bible, as many Christians of the present day seem to believe.

B. I know not, friend, how it is that good hearts can take up with this glaring untruth, this preposterous absurdity. From the philo-

sophy of Brahmic revelation I have already explained it clearly follows that the Brahmos acknowledge God alone as the Fountain-head of revelation, hold the inner revelation to be superior to all outward books, and repudiate all second-hand and derivative revelations. It is the primitive direct communication of God in the intuitive consciousness that constitutes a Brahmo's revelation : so that if his revelation is derived from any source at all it is from Infinite Intelligence ; and if he is guilty of theologic larceny his real guilt lies in having stolen from God's inexhaustible storehouse of truths in the "kingdom within." Perchance the Christians you speak of identify Brahmoism with Deism, and regard it as a heretical sect of Christianity, which though it sprang from the womb of Christianity, was nurtured in its cradle, and strengthened by its fostering care, impiously turned round against its mother. Or perhaps it is because Brahmoism coincides to some extent with Christianity that the latter calls the former a borrower. In neither case do we find arguments sufficiently cogent to justify the charge of borrowing. For Brahmoism is not like *Deism* of Christian origin : it is *Theism* and has a divine origin. It does not hang on a mere disbelief in revelation and a meagre abstract notion of the Cause of the world. It starts originally with a positive code of theistic doctrines which are prior to the Bible, and to all book-revelations which existed long ere Moses taught and Jesus

preached.* Again, the partial resemblance of Brahmoism to the creed of Christendom has been urged as an evidence to prove that the former has originated in the latter. Does it not rather prove that both Brahmoism and those tenets of Christianity which agree with it come from the same source, viz, God, and are therefore no more the truths of the west than of the east, no more the truths of Christians than of other men? Are they not engraven on the human soul? Do they not constitute a revelation of God to man? The truth is that the catholicity of Brahmoism keeps it always open to the charge of borrowing; and the followers of Hinduism have as much plausibility of argument on their side as those of Christianity in regard to that charge. But the charge involves a deeper absurdity; it shows that the accusants not only overstep the boundaries of logic but are devoid of common sense in regard to the life and safety of their own creed. Arguments are not needed to convince us that an attempt to ignore the simple

* If by the term *Theology* I understand the cognition of a primal being, that cognition is based either upon reason alone (*theologia rationalis*) or upon revelation (*theologia revelata*). The former cogitates its object either by means of pure transcendental conceptions, as an *ens originarium, realissimum, ens entium*, and is termed *transcendental theology*; or by means of conception derived from the nature of our own mind, as supreme intelligence, and must then be entitled *natural theology*. The person who believes in a transcendental theology alone, is termed a *Deist*; he who acknowledges the possibility of a natural theology also, a *Theist*.—Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

truths of intuitive belief which form the cardinal tenets of Brahmoism, and to hold that *all* truths are *derived* from the Bible is simply an attempt to destroy the very foundations of the Bible and of Christian faith. Does not the Bible presuppose and stand upon certain underived religious truths? No one in his senses will deny that unless we believe that God exists, that He is intelligent, that He seeks our welfare, that He is holy and trustworthy, we cannot safely accept any book-revelation as the guide to our salvation. In fact those beliefs are the very conditions on which rational faith in a revelation is possible. To deny them, or to call them derivative is to take off the life-blood of Christianity—the pedestal on which the Bible stands. Moreover this principle is admitted by all thoughtful Christian theologians whose minds are not contaminated by the dangerous principles of materialistic or sensational philosophy, and who therefore believe in the existence of a *natural light* in the mind.

I. It is, indeed, to be deeply regretted that the superficial thinkers of Christendom should be so far carried away by bigotry as to call the Brahmos pilferers, forgetful of the true character of Brahmoism and also of the best interests of their own creed. I must also confess my inability to make out on what grounds they affirm that the Brahmos laugh at paper revelation and think it hateful to touch the Bible, when the spirit of Brahmoism is so liberal.

B. O my brother, it comports not with Brahmoism's exalted and catholic spirit to scoff at or hate book-revelations. Such a scoffing and hatred we consider an abomination. It is our duty to kiss and love truth wherever we can find it. O those charming psalms of David that draw tears of piety from the hardest heart and bring relief even unto the most afflicted! How inexhaustible are the riches of the precepts of Jesus! Can any one read them without being conscious that the heart is growing warm with love, and the soul strong with faith and enthusiasm? If you have studied the writings of that child of resignation, *Hafiz*, have you not oftentimes felt yourself soaring upon the wings of faith to the regions above, and there drinking plenteously the sweets of God's love in His blissful presence and encircled by His affectionate arms? When the *Upanishads* describe in stirring eloquence the sublimities of the spiritual world, what heart can crawl on the platform of vulgar cares, or forbear feeling the exalted joy and strength of the higher nature? Can it be believed that a heart that lustily thirsteth after wisdom unto salvation would reject or even view with indifference the noble ideas set forth in such books? A prejudice in this matter betrays only a disregard of truth: and a Brahmic heart abhors such a prejudice.

I. I cannot, my friend, after taking all these arguments into consideration, hesitate for one moment to accept the Brahmic theory of revela-

tion. Its scientific correctness is unquestionable : its utility remarkably great. But what strikes me above all, is its freedom from those prejudices in which sectarian theologies abound. Assuredly Brahmoism is the religion of love and liberty. Would that the truths and delights of Brahmic revelation were fully understood and enjoyed by all mankind !

I have now two more subjects of doctrinal theology to discuss—Atonement and Salvation. As we have no time to-day we may take up those subjects in our next interview.



ATONEMENT AND SALVATION.



NO. 12

JUNE 1861.

Inquirer. Though I admit that Brahmoism can furnish us with a revelation from God, I doubt its capacity to save us from sin. Your doctrines regarding the attributes of God, next world, and the destiny of life tend only to prove

the philosophical correctness of your creed ; but methinks, it leaves the great practical problem of salvation unsolved. It affords a safe and peaceful harbour to the mind which would otherwise have been perpetually tossed upon the waves of doubt : but it does not respond to the deep interrogation of the soul—" what shall I do to be saved ?" If my heart is wicked, of what use will a knowledge of divine attributes be to me ? Will it not merely tend to heighten my sufferings by keeping me incessantly alive to the magnitude of my depravity, without pointing out any remedy ? In fact the supremacy of a religion consists chiefly in its power to dispense salvation. Hence it is incumbent on you to prove that Brahmoism offers a satisfactory solution of the problem of salvation—that while it reveals wisdom to the mind, it also secures the deliverance of the soul from sin.

Brahmo. I don't see any difficulty in the solution of that problem. Brahmoism by representing God as infinite in mercy and loving-kindness gives hope and assurance to the grossest sinner that he will receive salvation at His hands. He whose name is Love cannot be indifferent to the cries of the patient sinner : He who looketh evermore after our welfare, and ministereth to the wants of the body cannot be supposed to refuse aid to the soul in its struggles for deliverance from sin.

I. No my friend, the solution is not so easy as you seem to suppose. True, the divine at-

tribute of mercy proves my implication that the God of Love gives salvation to sinners : but is not such indulgence to sinners incompatible with another attribute, viz. justice ? Let a sinner feel as bitterly as possible the torments of remorse, let him implore pardon with the utmost earnestness he can command : he may persuade mercy to respond to his plaint ; but will his prayers avail to turn justice from its strict and even-handed course ? Is not God infinite in justice as He is in goodness ? How then can a sin once committed be atoned for, as it has already stirred justice to the execution of its rigid and irrevocable decrees ? That which is done is done : you *must* suffer for it. It is utterly impossible in the nature of things to undo it ; the sin that has been once committed cannot be uncommitted—no, not even by the most remorseful supplications for mercy.

B. True, atonement is impossible in the nature of things if it means uncommitting a sin already committed. This is but the vulgar and popular idea of atonement. In order to ascertain whether divine mercy operates in behalf of a sinner—whether under its salutary influences he can atone for his sins, you have only to look into the present state of his mind : for if you are satisfied that he has turned away from his former wickedness by means of repentance and prayer, and has established his mind in righteousness, you have no other choice but to admit that his sins have been expiated by the grace of God.

I. I apprehend the inference is unwarrantable. You seem to overlook the main difficulty. Well, what is your idea of atonement ?

B. Atonement, scientifically considered, is nothing more than a return to God. The word *atone* simply means to be *at one* with God—to be reconciled to Him. By the commission of sin we turn astray from Him : we cease to enjoy His company. By atonement we renounce our sin, again draw near to Him, and enjoy the blessings of His company. Hence the turning back to God is the whole philosophy of atonement. Hence our belief that “repentance is atonement,” because repentance is the indispensable means of turning away from iniquity and returning to God.

I. All that is perfectly unobjectionable. But the mere circumstance of eschewing evil cannot constitute reconciliation with God. It is admitted on all hands that, unless some sacrifice is made, some equivalent is offered, no sinner can, by the mere fact of being reformed, receive His forgiveness. By transgressing His sacred laws we offend Him, and incur His serious displeasure ; and unless we offer adequate compensation, we cannot expect to be restored to His favour:—So that atonement, though it denotes reconciliation, becomes synonymous with the means of appeasing an offended Deity.

B. Appeasing an offended Deity ! What an unworthy conception of the divine nature ! Such

a conception might find a place in the barbarous creeds of superstition and idolatry, but is undoubtedly incompatible with the spirit of rational theology. Is it not audacious to liken the Most High to the vindictive and vengeful creatures of earth? Is He accessible to the passions of the flesh? Is He like man offended and enraged by insult, and appeased and satisfied by an apology or bribe, by tears or sacrifices? Is He a ruthless and blood-thirsty despot whose demoniac anger must seek vengeance and retaliation unless pacified by blood? Does He, like the heartless Jew, in the stubbornness of His resolve to retaliate, wrathfully demand His "pound of flesh?" Reason shudders at such horrid misrepresentations of the Deity! These are evidently the revolting dogmas of anthropomorphism which imputes to the Deity the passions and infirmities of the flesh, and the varied susceptibilities of good and evil incident to humanity, and in a word "hypostatizes and deifies" its own limited conceptions instead of worshipping the true God. It is from these dogmas that the unnumbered forms of sacrifice and offering have sprung in different ages and countries to lave the feet of the Deity with the blood of beasts and even human beings! Such ideas of God are certainly unacceptable to the enlightened spirit of the present age. The nineteenth century cannot drive itself to such an extent of infatuation as to believe the absurdities of the antiquated theology of Hinduism or Pentateuchism, and identify

God with Kali or the vindictive Jehovah of the old Testament. Nothing is so repugnant to its mind, so abhorrent to its feelings as to attempt to propitiate the Deity by such offerings as fragrant roses, handsome eatables &c or purchase the pardon of an angered God with the blood of Jesus Christ,—unworthy idea of that blessed child of God ! Our God is Absolute love. His is not the finite, phenomenal love of humanity, but everlasting and abiding love, immutable as His nature. In Him “there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.” He loveth us always. He changeth not though we change : our virtues and vices do not modify His nature. He is the “eternal and immutable Now of absolute Love.” The whole change which sin brings on is in ourselves, not in Him : so likewise the change consequent on atonement. Our sin does not stir His vengeance : our entreaties do not dissuade Him from His uniform purpose. What means then appeasing the wrath of God ? What need of sin-offerings ? True sacrifice means sacrifice of sin ; true offering is the offering of the heart ; true atonement a return to righteousness and thereby to God :—and divine forgiveness, far from being, like human forgiveness, cessation of resentment is simply a restoration of the sinner to the blessings of divine love. Thus you see that the mere fact of eschewing sin and purifying the heart constitutes atonement.

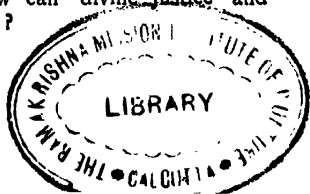
I. I now admit that forgiveness in the sense of suppression of anger and revenge is not ap-

plicable to the Deity, and an attempt to buy such forgiveness by offering sacrifices is altogether irrational. But I do not yet see how mere reformation or purification of the heart is reconcillation with God. If there is no variable-ness in God in regard to His love, the same is true in regard to His justice : and if infinite love dispels all apprehensions of divine vengeance and ignores all propitiatory offerings, infinite justice dispels all hopes of pardon and necessitates the infliction of adequate retribution on the sinner. Can subsequent reformation do aught to nullify the effect of former sin ? The sin has been committed, the awful sentence has been passed : can the foregoing of that sin arrest the operation of that sentence ? In the sacred tribunal of Heaven "there is no shuffling : " the decrees of justice are irreversible : there is no forgiveness at the expense of justice. If you admit that God's laws are immutable, how can you escape punishment ? and if you cannot escape punishment, is not your belief that you are reconciled to God deceptive and treacherous ?

B. I do not mean to say that atonement or reconciliation is to be effected at the expense of justice. Divine justice must be satisfied : due punishment must be inflicted. Justice and mercy must harmoniously operate.

I. That is just the difficulty I have experienced. How can God be just and yet justify the ungodly ? How can divine justice and mercy be reconciled ?

o



B. In the dispensation of punishment justice and mercy are both manifest. The difficulty you speak of arises solely from a misconception of the real *end* of punishment. God punishes sinners either for their weal or woe. Now it is evident that all arguments are against the latter, for no one is so foolish as to suppose that God inflicts punishment on sinners for gratifying His insatiable thirst for vengeance, that He delights in their agonies. It is for our welfare then that He visits our sins with due punishment. When a father chastises his refractory son, has he not the amendment of the latter in view? Does not the same generous motive actuate the school-master to use the rod? Do not courts of justice award punishment in order to repress crime and secure life and property? Far from displaying malevolence or vengeance, does not the administration of justice in all civilized countries exhibit good will? To push the argument further, does not the absence of justice in all these cases betray likewise the absence of benevolence? Nothing is more common than to ascribe inhumanity to those who punish for the sake of gratifying anger and vengeance, and reprobating as imprudent those who withhold punishment when it is necessary for the sake of amendment. Who justifies maternal indulgence if it spoils the child? Who vindicates tribunals of justice if they systematically suffer crime to go unpunished? If, then, in the

case of men justice divorced from benevolence is a monstrosity, if humanly speaking, rational justice acts harmoniously with a desire to promote the welfare of others, how can we ascribe to Infinite Loving-kindness a spurious and suicidal justice which ignores the very principle that constitutes its life and glory? Can reason impute to God what is blameworthy in man? The God of Love punishes us not for punishment's sake, not for vengeance' sake, but because he loves us, and desires our welfare. Suppose due retribution were remitted, and sinners were systematically forgiven, would not an impetus be afforded by such indulgence to all the recklessness of unrestrained and unrestrainable wickedness? None will deny that remission of moral punishment far from being conducive is hopelessly prejudicial to the interests of sinners. The truth is that such punishment, like all generous punishments, is remedial: it has amendment for its object. It acts like the unpalatable drug, painful in its immediate effects but beneficial in the end. It is the only means which the sinner has of even becoming conscious of his iniquities: its awful peals arouse him from his death-like sleep; its intolerable agonies assure him that he is not healthy, and thus bestir him to suitable exertions for amendment. Can such means be withheld from him without interfering with the best interests of his soul? It is infliction, therefore, and not remission of punishment that shows the Father's love to-

wards His children. If such is the case can we persuade ourselves to look at punishment with any other feeling than gratitude? Is not a prayer for remission of punishment equal to saying—"Lord, permit me to continue uninterruptedly in my sins?" Should we not rather drink the cup of retribution though bitter, saying—"Whatsoever the Lord hath given the same shall I drink, for He doeth all for my good." I hope you now clearly understand that God punishes sinners for their good, that all His inflictions are remedial and salutary. Behold the harmony between divine justice and goodness. Justice demands that the iniquitous should be visited with adequate punishment: goodness demands that their welfare should be promoted. Punishment is inflicted—justice is satisfied: amendment is sought—goodness is satisfied. Thus in the act of punishment justice and mercy instead of running counter to each other most beautifully harmonize. Why then do honest inquirers after truth suffer themselves to be startled by the visionary spectre of the irreconcilableness of divine justice and mercy?

I. I do not at present see anything objectionable in what you have said: nay your arguments seem to me to be quite rational and plausible. But methinks you take a very mild view of punishment. Are not those who have transgressed the law of God, bade defiance to His repeated remonstrances, and set at nought the

united dictates of gratitude and love, entitled to a degree of punishment whose intensity and duration the mind cannot adequately conceive, and are infinitely greater than you or I may be disposed to believe? Indeed a wish for mild punishment is very natural, sinful as we all are! Does not sin against Infinite Holiness deserve infinite punishment—eternal hell?

B. It is perfectly immaterial whether the punishment is heavy or light so long as its object is admitted to be the amendment of sinners. That the frightful nature of sin deserves a punishment whose severity is beyond the reach of conception no one can venture to question. Habitual violation of God's law, horrid as it is in the abstract, if viewed in connection with the solemn relations in which we stand to Him, brings the strongest assurance with it that a most awful punishment awaits the sinner in comparison with whose reality the most vivid descriptions of poetical fancy are as nothing. This however does by no means affect the arguments I have adduced. God may visit us with the direst torments: but such torments are intended for our welfare, and will continue till they effect this object. But to believe that they are everlasting,—that sinners are doomed to eternal perdition, is to accept a dogma which is subversive of the principles of divine justice and mercy I have already explained. If the commission of one sin disentitles man, for ever, to the privileges of God's love and the blessings of virtue, by bring-

ing on eternal punishment, the legitimate object of punishment is not accomplished, the necessity of amendment is precluded, mercy becomes a name, and the God of love is made the most vindictive monster that the human mind can conceive ! In fact the theory of eternal punishment seems to be only a means of frightening people into irrational creeds.

I. If it is true, then, that God's mercy is not interfered with by His justice, and that the grossest sinner after suffering punishment can find acceptance with Him, what is the necessity for mediatorial redemption and vicarious atonement ?

B. None whatever. The very idea of delivering a sinner from his iniquity by saddling another party with it is preposterous in the extreme. Yet it is upheld with the object of reconciling God's justice and mercy. But how justice can be satisfied by visiting the innocent with the grave consequence of sin—how mercy be shown by assuring a sinner of his being out of the reach of punishment and amendment, no unbiassed mind can determine. In fact, vicarious atonement contradicts both justice and mercy. Let us canvass the question more scientifically, that we may find the whole philosophy of the doctrine of vicarious atonement. The transfer of punishment from man to man is an utter impossibility in the moral government of God. Those who believe otherwise betray an ignorance of the *nature* of moral punishment. The

punishment of sin is not, as some suppose, a penalty arbitrarily and artificially connected with sin, but is its natural and necessary consequence. It is not something which a capricious judge awards, and which might be remitted, extenuated, or transferred at his pleasure, but a necessary consequence of sin fixed by the Creator of the universe, and can be separated from it only by upsetting the established order of things. It follows sin in just the same way as an effect follows a cause. If you bring your fingers in contact with fire the necessary and unavoidable consequence will be a burning sensation in your fingers. That sensation *must* follow being the effect of the contact. Similarly the mind that commits sin *must* be visited with due retribution as the effect of that sin. Sin potentially involves its own punishment "as the acorn contains the oak." In short the relation that subsists between sin and punishment is that of cause and effect, and is therefore *necessary* not *arbitrary*. Such being the case it is impossible that you should suffer the punishment which my sin deserves, since the cause being in me, the effect must likewise be in me. In order that you may suffer the penalty you must have the sin which is its cause in you. Innocence can never be the victim of that retribution which is due to sin alone: nor can sin enjoy the reward which is due to virtue alone. Can I by any imaginable contrivance—by any means earthly

or unearthly transfer to my brother's body that burning sensation to which the contact of my fingers with fire exposes me? If not, would it not be as absurd to suppose I can pass on to my brother's soul that punishment to which my sin has rendered me liable? God's laws are immutable as well in the spiritual as in the physical world. The transfer of moral punishment then is absolutely impossible : and it is idle to discuss whether the transfer is to be made to an inferior animal or a human being. A scapegoat is but a fantastic dream. It is an imaginary animal that inhabits the region of dogmatic and idle theology, but is not a living reality. The ideas of cleansing sin by sacrifices, holy ablutions or the recital of sacred texts, of buying atonement with the price of blood &c., are only relics of anthropomorphism. Let theorists dream dreams, *there is no royal road to salvation* : there is no easy and convenient mode of atonement : there can be none. Behold then the baselessness of the stupendous fabric of the dogma of vicarious atonement! Nor is this dogma less mischievous in its practical tendencies than it is absurd in theory. By giving sinners the assurance that the awful punishment of their sins will be transferred to others provided they believe in some scheme of mediatorial atonement, and thereby dispelling all fears as to the heavy penalty which actually awaits them, it systematically encourages wickedness, far from discouraging it. By identifying virtue

and vice with dogmatic belief and unbelief, with consent and dissent, it makes the sinner believe he is forgiven in spite of the rottenness of his soul, and thus leads him to forego all attempts at attaining actual purity. It makes sin and punishment barterable commodities : it paralyzes divine justice, makes punishment a mere name, lulls conscience to sleep, gives an imaginary elysium to sin, and converts God's moral government into a scene of lawlessness, injustice, and disorder, in which " the elect " buy out the law. Behold on the other hand the salutary effects of the Brahmic theory of atonement ! It guarantees adequate reward and punishment to virtue and vice, and regards the separation of reward from virtue and punishment from sin absolutely impossible. It upholds justice by invariably giving every man his due. It discourages sin by making penalty inevitable, and repudiating all attempts to stave it off by the observance of external ceremonies. It encourages virtue by making it incumbent on sinners to repent for sin, and make the best exertions to eschew it. It keeps us always alive to the actual state of the heart, and constrains us to pass through all the exercises and struggles of the soul which are requisite to purity. It makes purity the life of atonement, repentance and amendment the condition of forgiveness.

I. Your arguments are certainly unanswerable on philosophical grounds. But are they not such as startle and dishearten sinners ?

Does not Brahmoism ever and anon preach a sermon of despair to them ? The sum total of its teachings, as I could gather from what you have said, is simply this:—a sin once committed can by no means be undone : moral punishment can neither be remitted nor transferred : it must come with its whole weight upon sinners. Are not such doctrines calculated to extinguish even the last ray of hope and joy in the sinner's mind ? Instead of showing him the road to salvation, and delivering him from his troubles, they only prove his case hopeless, by aggravating in a ten-fold ratio the already overpowering fears and anxieties of his mind.

B. This brings us to the subject of salvation. I have already explained to you our views of atonement. You will presently see how they bear upon the doctrine of salvation. Salvation literally means deliverance—from *salvo*, to save. Deliverance from what?—one would naturally ask. If it means deliverance from *punishment*, salvation is impossible, for, as I have already said, the connection of sin with punishment is necessary. Nor is such deliverance desirable if punishment is the means of amendment. But salvation, true salvation, denotes simply deliverance from *sin*. In this sense it is both possible and desirable. To be freed from the effect so long as the cause continues to operate is not possible ; but to be freed from the cause itself is possible. To be relieved from the taste of an unpalatable drug, if it

insure restoration of health is not desirable ; but to be relieved from the malady which demands the use of that drug is simply what we desire. Justice will enforce its irreversible decrees : sin will be visited with adequate punishment : but Mercy is not deaf to the cries of the contrite sinner—the doors of salvation are open to all. When the sinner thinks of punishment, he trembles and quails, and feels his lot hard “beyond compare ;” but when once he looks to the merciful arm that administers the punishment, he finds consolation and relief. When he sees the cup he weeps ; he rejoices when he sees that a Father fills the cup. When he remembers that the Judge is also the Father—that the Moral Governor is also the God of salvation, he cannot hesitate to “kiss the rod” that falls upon him. Can anything be more cheering to the sinner than the conviction that He whose laws he has repeatedly transgressed, whose claims to his affection, gratitude, and obedience he has with the utmost impunity repelled, is still ready to lead him back to the paths of righteousness, provided he sincerely repents for his sins. Our God is not a God of vengeance—a vindictive blood-thirsty tyrant, but the God of infinite love, all whose ways are merciful and kind. He does not look at our sins with a vengeful eye, nor does He view them with indifference. Ever anxious for our salvation, He watches us with more than a father’s solicitude, with more than a mother’s tenderness. Whether rich or poor,

strong or weak, virtuous or vicious, we are ever under the wings of His gracious providence. In hours of trial and difficulty He is the same affectionate Father and Friend that He is in hours of gladness and prosperity. When the sinner deeply repents for his sins, struggles for deliverance, and prays for strength, the God of love in the fulness of His mercy humbles Himself to hear his cries and lift him from the gulf of sin. As he prays and labours, he gains greater strength and receives greater light in the presence of his Lord. To every sinner, even the grossest, the promise of reconciliation hath been made. The arms of Ever-lasting Mercy are stretched for the reception of all ; the fault is ours if we neglect to have recourse to Him. He shuts the doors of grace against none ; the fault is ours if we do not enter the doors. It is not He that refuses salvation, but we that refuse to accept it. "Pray—pray 'sincerely, earnestly and unceasingly," says Brahmoism unto the sinner, "resolve solemnly, labour energetically, persevere steadily—above all, throw yourself wholly upon the arms of the God of Love ; He will help you in overcoming temptations, and sacrificing the enemies of the soul by giving you strength, enthusiasm and fortitude. Rely upon Him—the sole Friend of the fallen, the sole Protector of sinners—and He shall save you." I value and love Brahmoism chiefly for having taught me to take shelter under the mercy of such a God. Without Him life is death, joy sorrow, and afflu-

ence want : with Him we become rich and happy—all our wants are lost in His fullness. He is our all : our Father, our Teacher, our Saviour. He is our only hope amidst the trials and perils of life. He is our light, our love, our life. To Him, the God of salvation, belongeth glory in heaven and earth—in time and eternity. May all sinners learn to place their deepest faith in Him, their only Benefactor and Friend—that the sweets of salvation may abound in their lives !—Dearer to me than my life is Brahmoism, for she teaches me that my God shall save me from my sins. Glory to Infinite Love !—So indulgent to sinners, so kind to the poor and the humble in spirit, so exuberant in mercy to the weak ! O, my brother, the heart cannot contain His love—

I. Here my discussion ends. All my wants have been supplied, all my doubts dispelled. Thanks to your kindness, my dearest brother—glory to God's providence, I have at last known where to rest my faith. O, the simplicities and sweets of Brahmoism ! Brahmoism, tender child of God, knows only to depend upon her Kind Father for all things—for revelation, for strength, for faith, for purity, and for salvation. She depends not upon external objects—upon men or books, forms or ceremonies. In the innermost recesses of the heart she worships her Father, and becomes pure in His Holiness. May Brahmoism find a place in every heart ! May the worship of the One True God reign in heaven and earth to the glory of His eternal name !—

(182)

Oh, for the day when the banners of Brahmoism shall be planted in every land—when sectarian dogmatism and discord shall perish—and LOVE, PURITY, JOY, AND BLESSEDNESS prevail throughout the length and breadth of God's earth ! Farewell.

THE END.



~~Phone 444 3, 9~~
TRUST PRINTERS & BINDERS.
17, Lake Road Calcutta-2.



Phone-44-319

TRUST PRINTERS & BINDERS.
17, Lake Road Calcutta-21

